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MIRACLES IN ŠĪ'Ī THOUGHT A CASE-STUDY OF THE MIRACLES ATTRIBUTED TO IMĀM ĠA'FAR AL-ŠĀDIQ*

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Abstract

According to Imāmī doctrine, the ability to perform miracles (*Mu'ǧizāt*) is one of the characteristics of the Imām. This goes against the position of the Sunna, which claims that only prophets are able to perform miracles. The article discusses the various definitions of miracles in Islam and surveys the miracles attributed to Imām Ġa'far al-Šādiq (d. 148/765). This survey demonstrates the various capabilities attributed to the Imām and illuminates a number of patterns common to the traditions relating the Imām's miraculous deeds. The most noteworthy of these patterns is the association of a miracle performed by the Imām with a qur'ānic miracle, usually performed by a prophet. The aim of this pattern is to reinforce the Imāmī position regarding the equal status of an Imāmī and prophetic miracle.

According to Imāmī ŠĪ'Ī doctrine, the Imām can be recognized, among other things, by his ability to perform miracles and this ability is proof of his right to the Imamate. The aim of this article is to define the characteristics of the miracle in Imāmī ŠĪ'ism by carrying out a typological examination of the miracles attributed to Imām Ġa'far al-Šādiq.

Al-Šādiq has been chosen as a case-study for two main reasons. The first is that the number of miraculous acts attributed to him is especially large. In Ibn Šahrāšūb's *Manāqib āl Abī Ṭālib*, for example, the group of traditions dealing with al-Šādiq's miracles is by far the largest.²

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¹ "ŠĪ'a" and "ŠĪ'ī" refer throughout this article to Imāmī (Twelver) ŠĪ'ism.

² The chapters that include al-Šādiq's miracles comprise a total of twenty-four pages, as opposed to similar chapters dealing with the miracles of other imams; see, for example, the chapters about the miracles of al-Bāqir (eleven pages), al-Kāzim (twelve pages) or al-ʿAskarī (twelve pages); see Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3. A similar situation prevails

In al-Mağlisī's *Bihār al-anwār* the chapter about al-Šādiq's miracles is ninety eight pages long and includes two hundred and twenty seven traditions; in this compilation, the only Imam credited with more miracles is 'Alī.³

Another reason for selecting al-Šādiq for such an examination is his status in Imāmī Šī'ism. Al-Šādiq (d. 148/765) is the sixth Imam in the line of Imams recognized by the Imāmiyya. The Imāmī doctrine began to crystallize in his lifetime and several ideas central to Šī'ī thought developed in this period. Al-Šādiq's status as a scholar was appreciated beyond Šī'ī circles and he holds a unique position in Šūfī thought. Al-Šādiq was not politically active and did not support the uprisings of Zayd b. 'Alī (122/740) or Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (145/762).⁴ Therefore, the miracles attributed to al-Šādiq will be the focal point of this paper, in the hope that a discussion and analysis of these traditions will serve to illuminate the concept of the miracle in Imāmī Šī'ism.

Little has been written about al-Šādiq himself in the way of secondary literature. In addition to the information that can be found in works dealing with the Šī'a, several articles have been written about him: Ruska wrote a short article discussing the relationship between al-Šādiq and Ġābir b. Ḥayyān⁵ and devoted the second volume of his book about Arab alchemists to al-Šādiq.⁶ Another article has been written about al-Šādiq's contribution to the Islamic scientific tradition,⁷ and an article by J. B. Taylor examines al-Šādiq's status in Šūfī thought.⁸

There is a similar lack of research about the concept of the miracle in Šī'ī thought.⁹ As far as I know, only two articles deal specifically

in *Kitāb al-ḥarā'ig*: although one of the chapters which deals with al-Šādiq's miracles is relatively short (entitled *fi mu'ǧizat al-Imām Ġāfar b. Muḥammad al-Šādiq*, ch. 1, pp. 294-307), another chapter (*fi a'lām Ġāfar b. Muḥammad al-Šādiq*, vol. 2, pp. 606-649) is especially long. Out of the one hundred and thirteen traditions in the chapter which deals with miracles attributed to all twelve Imams (vol. 2, pp. 707-790), thirty four relate miracles performed by al-Šādiq.

³ See, for example, the chapter about the miracles attributed to al-Bāqir (vol. 46: 53 pages, 89 traditions), al-Kāzīm (vol. 48: 71 pages, 106 traditions) or al-'Askarī (vol. 50: 58 pages, 81 traditions). See also Amir-Moezzi, "Savoir c'est pouvoir," pp. 259-260.

⁴ Hodgson, *Šādiq*, pp. 374-375. See also GAS, vol. 1, pp. 528-531.

⁵ Ruska, J., "Ġābir ibn Ḥayyān und seine Beziehungen zum Imām Ġāfar aṣ-Šādiq," *Der Islam* 16 (1927): 264-266.

⁶ Ruska, J., *Arabische Alchemisten* (Heidelberg, 1924).

⁷ Fahd, T., "Ġāfar aṣ-Šādiq et la tradition scientifique arabe," *Le Shi'isme Imamite*, Colloque de Strasbourg (1968) (Paris, 1970), pp. 131-142.

⁸ Taylor, J. B., "Ġāfar al-Šādiq, spiritual forebearer of the Šūfīs," *Islamic Culture* 40 (1966): 97-113.

⁹ The place of the miracle in Šī'ī doctrine is mentioned in passing in most books

with this issue. One by M. A. Amir-Moezzi surveys the various miracles attributed to the Imams in Šī'ī Imāmī thought,¹⁰ and an article by E. Kohlberg focuses on vision-related miracles attributed to the Imams.¹¹

The present study is based on the following sources:

1) *Baṣā'ir al-darağāt fi ṣaḍā'il āl Muḥammad* by Abū Ġa'far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Farrūḡ al-Šaffār al-Qummī (d. 290/903). Al-Šaffār was a contemporary of the tenth and eleventh Imams, 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Hādī (d. 254/868) and Ḥasan al-'Askarī (d. 260/874).¹² The importance of *Baṣā'ir al-darağāt* as far as this paper is concerned stems from the fact that it contains fairly early Šī'ī traditions.¹³

2) *Kitāb al-ḥarā'ig wa-l-ğarā'ih* by Quṭb al-Dīn Sa'īd b. Hibat Allāh al-Rāwandī (d. 573/1177-8). This work is devoted solely to the miraculous acts attributed to the Imāms.¹⁴

3) *Manāqib āl Abī Ṭālib* by Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Šahrāšūb (d. 588/1192). Ibn Šahrāšūb had a reputation as the greatest Šī'ī scholar of his generation and was also respected in Sunnī circles.¹⁵ *Manāqib āl Abī Ṭālib* is comprised of biographies of the Imams. Every biography includes a chapter about the miracles attributed to each Imam.

4) *Bihār al-anwār* by Muḥammad Bāqir al-Mağlisī (d. 1698/1110). Al-Mağlisī lived in Iṣfahān and dedicated most of his life to the collection of Šī'ī traditions.¹⁶ *Bihār al-anwār* contains a wealth of traditions taken from various sources, among which are the three sources mentioned

about the Šī'a. See, for example, Momen, M., *An Introduction to Shi'ī Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New Haven and London, 1985), p. 23; S. H. M. Jafri, *Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* (London and New York, 1979), p. 294. See also Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 39; *Karāma*, p. 616.

¹⁰ Amir-Moezzi, M. A., "Savoir c'est pouvoir."

¹¹ Kohlberg, "Vision."

¹² For al-Šaffār, see Amir-Moezzi, "Al-Šaffār al-Qummī," and also *GAL*, S. I, p. 319. For *Baṣā'ir*, see *Darī'a*, vol. 3, pp. 124-125.

¹³ On the dating of Šī'ī *ḥadīṭ* literature, see E. Kohlberg, "Šī'ī *Ḥadīṭ*," in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 299-307, esp. p. 303, and A. Falaturi, "Die Zwölfer-Schia aus der Sicht eines Schiiten: Probleme ihrer Untersuchung," *Festschrift Werner Caskel* (Leiden, 1968), p. 64. On the importance of *Baṣā'ir* as an early *ḥadīṭ* compilation, see Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, p. 16 and Amir-Moezzi, "Al-Šaffār al-Qummī," p. 222.

¹⁴ For al-Rāwandī, see *A'yan al-šī'a*, vol. 35, pp. 16-24. For *Kitāb al-ḥarā'ig*, see *Darī'a*, vol. 7, pp. 145-146 and Amir-Moezi, "Savoir c'est pouvoir," p. 254, n. 13.

¹⁵ See "Ibn Šahrāšūb," *EP*, s.v. (B. Scarcia Amoretti) and "Ebn Šahrāšūb," *Elran*, s.v. (M. A. Amir-Moezzi). For *Manāqib*, see *Darī'a*, vol. 22, pp. 318-319.

¹⁶ For al-Mağlisī, see, "al-Mağlisī," *EP*, s.v. (A. H. Hairī), and *GAS*, S. II, pp. 90-93. For *Bihār*, see *Darī'a*, vol. 3, pp. 16-27, and "Beḥār al-Anwār," *Elran*, s.v. (E. Kohlberg).

above, thus facilitating a comparison of the variant traditions that appear in these sources.

There are a number of criteria by which a typology can be carried out, but since the aim of this paper is to examine the concept of the miracle in Imāmī thought, the following traditions have been divided in categories according to the nature of the miracle related in each *ḥadīth*, thereby reflecting more clearly the spheres influenced by the Imam's miracles. One result of such a method of categorisation is that one *ḥadīth* can be relegated to more than one category or may encompass elements which are relevant to several categories. Not all the traditions that appear in the above-mentioned sources have been adduced in this paper: when several traditions relate the same kind of miracle and do not contribute further to our knowledge of the essence of the miracle or the Imam's powers, some have been mentioned in the notes; others have not been mentioned at all.

I. *Miracles in Islamic Thought*

As a first step towards understanding the Šī'ī concept of the miracle, the place of miracles in Islam should be clarified, as should the divergent attitudes of the Sunna and Šī'a towards miracles.

The chief miracle attributed to Muḥammad is the Qur'ān,¹⁷ which is identified as decisive proof of his mission.¹⁸ In the years following the death of the Prophet, as a result of popular beliefs and the desire to equate Muḥammad's standing with those of Moses and Jesus (two prophets whose miracles are described in the Qur'ān and who were compared to Muḥammad in the polemic discussions between Islam on one hand and Judaism and Christianity on the other), there arose an aspiration to ascribe further miracles to Muḥammad.¹⁹ This is reflected in Ibn Ishāq's *Sīra*, where a list of miracles attributed to the Prophet appears;²⁰ further miracles were ascribed to him in the *ḥadīth* literature.²¹

There are several words in Arabic that can be translated in English as "miracle" or "marvel."²² But the use of the English "miracle" is prob-

¹⁷ *Mu'ǧiza*, p. 295.

¹⁸ Adang, *Muslim Writers*, p. 162.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

²⁰ Horowitz, "The Muḥammad Legend," pp. 53-57.

²¹ *Mu'ǧiza*, p. 295, Adang, *Muslim Writers*, p. 162.

²² For examples of different usages of "miracle" in secondary literature, see Bāqillānī,

lematic, since it cannot reflect the different shades of meaning inherent in the various Arabic terms. A similar problem exists in other languages; in German, for example, the word “Wunder” is often used, with the same potentially misleading result as the English usage.²³ Thus the words “miracle,” “marvel” and “Wunder” function as general terms, whereas Arabic uses several words to differentiate between various phenomena.

The Qurʾān uses a number of words to describe miracles. The meaning of these terms is similar and can be translated as sign, proof or token (*āya*, *burhān*,²⁴ *bayyina*, *dalīl*). Two other terms which are especially important to the present discussion (and do not appear in the Qurʾān) are *muʿǧiza* and *karāma*.

Muʿǧiza is the term usually used to designate a miracle performed by a prophet. This, however, is not the only term used to denote a miracle and it would be a mistake to treat the various words as synonyms. Some of the terms—such as those mentioned above—are technical terms which have specific meanings and cannot all be translated simply as “miracle.” Thus it could be said that while every *muʿǧiza* is a miracle, not every miracle is a *muʿǧiza*.

Muʿǧiza is derived from the root ʿǧ.z. The verb in the first form means to lack strength, power or ability to do a thing.²⁵ In the second and fourth forms, the verb has the meaning of causing another to be unable to perform a certain deed, hence *iʿǧāz al-Qurʾān*, which refers to the human inability to imitate the unique style of the Qurʾān.²⁶ According to one definition, a *muʿǧiza* is

a miracle performed by a prophet; distinguished from *karāma*, which signifies one performed by a saint, or righteous man, not claiming to be a prophet ... as defined by Muslim theologians, an event at variance with the usual course [of nature], produced by means of one who lays claim to the office of a prophet, in contending with those who disacknowledge [his claim], in such a manner as renders them unable to produce the like thereof; or an event breaking through, or

Kitāb al-bayān, p. 13 and Martin, R., “The Role of the Baṣrah Muʿtazila in Formulating the Doctrine of the Apologetic Miracle,” *JNES* 39 (1980): 175-189.

²³ I. e., the title of the first chapter in Gramlich, *Wunder*. “Wunder und Gewohnheit.” In his book Gramlich gives every Arabic term a German equivalent, thus solving the terminological problem: *karāma* is rendered as “Huldwunder” and *muʿǧiza* as “Machtwunder.”

²⁴ In this context the primary meaning of *burhān* is meant—“the manifest evidence of an irrefutable proof”—and not the secondary meaning of “the mode of argumentation, and the argument itself which leads to that certitude”; see “Burhān,” *ET*², s.v. (L. Gardet).

²⁵ *Lane*, s.v.

²⁶ See “Iʿdjāz,” *ET*², s.v. (G. E. von Grunebaum).

infringing, the usual course [of nature] (*amr ḥāriq li-l-āda*), inviting to good and happiness, coupled with a claim to the prophetic office, and intended to manifest the veracity of him who claims to be an apostle of God.²⁷

If one takes this short definition at face value, it should be clear how one may distinguish a *muḡiza* from a *karāma*—a *muḡiza* designates a miracle performed by a prophet, whereas a *karāma* is one performed by a *walī*.²⁸ This definition appears mainly in Sunnī sources. The Šīʿa too uses the term *muḡiza* to denote a prophetic miracle, but also uses it to describe a miracle performed by an Imam. To clarify this issue further, I shall first discuss the Sunnī point of view and then I shall present the Šīʿī position.

There are several elements which differentiate a *muḡiza* from a *karāma*, but the two do have one important aspect in common. This is the element of *ḥarq al-āda*. This term denotes an act of such an extraordinary nature that it violates the customary order of things instituted by Allāh in this world. This element is so basic to the concept of both the *muḡiza* and the *karāma* that it itself can be used as a synonym of either one of these terms.²⁹ According to al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013),³⁰ the divinely-instituted practice, or custom, is the manner in which processes repeat themselves, whether by renewal or continuity.³¹ In order for any action to be considered *ḥarq al-āda*, it must violate this custom. Such an action must also violate the unique practice of the group of beings to which the person performing the act belongs. Thus, if a human being carries out an action which is routinely performed by angels, but not by humans, his action can be considered *ḥarq al-āda*.³²

²⁷ Lane, s.v.

²⁸ A *walī* is one who is the friend (or favourite) of God and the object of divine beneficence and favours; Lane, s.v. According to Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, the literal meaning of *walī* is "close": a person who is close to God due to his obedience. God's proximity to such a person can be seen in that God treats him with mercy and he is a beneficiary of his grace; Rāzī, *al-Taḥṣīn al-kabīr*, vol. 21, p. 72. On the *karāma* as a sign of the *walī*'s special status, see also Radtke, "Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī," p. 290. On the distinction between the *muḡiza* and the *karāma*, see also the introduction of D. Aigle and C. Mayeur-Jaouen to *Miracle et Karāma*, pp. 14-15 and Geoffroy, "Attitudes contrastées," p. 301.

²⁹ For the use of *ḥarq al-āda* as denoting a *muḡiza*, see the title of the chapter dealing with al-Šādiq's miracles in Ibn Šahrāshūb, *Manāqib*. For the use of *ḥarq al-āda* as signifying a *karāma*, see Rāzī, *al-Taḥṣīn al-kabīr*, vol. 21, pp. 175-176, where al-Rāzī uses *ḥarq al-āda* to describe an act which he later defines as a *karāma*.

³⁰ See "al-Bāqillānī," *EP*, s.v. (R. J. McCarthy).

³¹ Bāqillānī, *Kutāb al-bayān*, cited in Gramlich, *Wunder*, pp. 16-17.

³² Gramlich, *Wunder*, pp. 17-18.

ḥarq al-ʿāda can occur only among created beings, since only they have a practice which can be violated.³³ According to any definition, both *muʿǧiza* and *karāma* are actions which fulfill these requirements of *ḥarq al-ʿāda*.³⁴

Apart from this element of *ḥarq al-ʿāda*, the *muʿǧiza* has several other features: it must be an action which is beyond the capability of human beings,³⁵ it must be inimitable³⁶ and must confirm the claimant's statement.³⁷ But the most important and unique characteristic of the *muʿǧiza* is its connection to prophecy; a *muʿǧiza* is a miracle performed by one claiming to be a prophet and is always accompanied by a claim to recognition as such.³⁸ The aim of a *muʿǧiza* is to prove the veracity of a prophet's claim, therefore, only a true prophet can perform a *muʿǧiza*. A *karāma*, on the other hand, is not accompanied by such a claim. The claim to prophethood—or the lack thereof—is the most important element which distinguishes a *muʿǧiza* from a *karāma* and is sometimes the only one mentioned.³⁹ Therefore a person who carries out an act that has within it an element of *ḥarq al-ʿāda*, but does not claim to be a prophet, is not performing a *muʿǧiza* but a *karāma*.⁴⁰ According to this definition, a prophet must perform a *muʿǧiza* to prove his claim to prophethood, while a *walī* does not have to perform a *karāma* to prove his standing as such.⁴¹

³³ Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 17.

³⁴ Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 25; Rāzī, *al-Barāhīn*, cited in Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 101; Ḥillī, *Anwār*, p. 184; *Karāma*, p. 615.

³⁵ This is the opinion of 'Abd al-Jabbār, see McDermott, *al-Shaikh al-Mufīd*, p. 85.

³⁶ Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 27.

³⁷ This condition means that the *muʿǧiza* must comply with the claim of the person who performs it: if a person claims to be able to raise the dead and then performs a different miracle, his action has not confirmed the veracity of his claim; Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 33. If the event does take place as the claimant said it would, but contradicts him in another fashion—e. g., if he claims to be able to make a lizard speak and it speaks, but accuses him of being a liar—this also cannot be taken as confirming his veracity; Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 35.

³⁸ According to al-Rāzī, an action that has elements of *ḥarq al-ʿāda* can be carried out by someone who presents claims of a different sort (such as a claim to divinity) and also by liars or magicians, but such an action can be called a *muʿǧiza* only when performed by a prophet. See Rāzī, *al-Taḥṣīn al-kabīr*, cited in Gramlich, *Wunder*, pp. 19-20.

³⁹ Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 41.

⁴⁰ Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 20.

⁴¹ Gramlich, *Wunder*, pp. 52-53. But see the opinion of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī according to which neither the acts of the prophets nor those of the *awliyā'* are proof of their status; these are only a means of facilitating the acceptance of God's message amongst the people; Radtke, "Al-Hakīm al-Tirmadhī," p. 296.

There are other elements which set the *mu'ǧīza* apart from the *karāma*. Since the aim of a *mu'ǧīza* is to prove a claim to prophethood, it must be done openly and publicly, while the *karāma* should be kept secret.⁴² The purpose of a *mu'ǧīza* is to convince others, as opposed to the *karāma*, which is meant to support the person to whom it is revealed.⁴³ A public display of a *mu'ǧīza* is also required so that the prophet may present a challenge (*taḥaddī*) to his opponents, another feature characteristic of a *mu'ǧīza*. The view according to which a *mu'ǧīza* should be displayed in public and a *karāma* kept secret is especially common in Šūfī thought.⁴⁴

Another difference between the *mu'ǧīza* and the *karāma* is related to the intent and will of the person who performs the act: the *mu'ǧīza* takes place because the person who performs it wishes to prove the veracity of his claim, unlike the *karāma*, which appears unexpectedly and does not necessarily take place because the *walī* so wishes.⁴⁵ According to the Šūfī position, the *karāma* is sometimes considered an obstacle to achieving unity with God, hence one should not wish for a *karāma* and should even treat the appearance of one with suspicion.⁴⁶

The Šīʿī attitude towards the *mu'ǧīza* is unique in that the Šīʿa ascribes the ability to perform *mu'ǧīzāt* to Imams, as well as to prophets.⁴⁷ This view is presented by the Imāmī theologian al-Sayḥ al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) thus:

As for their performing miracles [*mu'ǧīzāt*] and receiving signs [*a'lām*], it is possible but not necessary from reason, nor is it impossible from analogy. Mutually confirmatory and widespread traditions have come down to this effect. I hold it on the basis of revelations and the truth of traditions.⁴⁸

⁴² Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 43. See also the introduction of D. Aigle and C. Mayeur-Jaouen to *Miracle et Karāma*, p. 15.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 49.

⁴⁴ Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 43; Geoffroy, "Attitudes contrastées," p. 303. On the *taḥaddī* and its relation to the *mu'ǧīza*, see also P. Antes, *Prophetenwunder in der Aš'ariya bis al-Gazālī* (Freiburg, 1970), pp. 36-37; Ḥillī, *Anwār*, p. 184.

⁴⁵ Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 52.

⁴⁶ *Karāma*, p. 616.

⁴⁷ Other terms used by the Šīʿa to describe the Imams' miraculous powers are *a'āğīb* (sing. *u'ayūbā*), meaning something amazing or marvellous, and *qudra*, meaning power or ability; See Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, p. 91. I do not intend to discuss these terms, as they do not constitute the main point of contention between the Sunna and Šīʿa in the context of the Imams' miracles.

⁴⁸ Mufīd, *Awā'il*, pp. 40-41, translated by McDermott in McDermott, *Al-Shaikh al-Mufīd*, p. 112.

Al-Mufid goes on to outline the various opinions regarding the Imams' ability to perform miracles:

With me in this opinion are the majority of the Imamites. The Nawbahtīs⁴⁹ disagree and reject it. Many who belong to the Imāmī party say it is rationally necessary, just as they say in the case of the prophets. All Mu'tazilites oppose us in this except Ibn al-Iḥshīd⁵⁰ and his followers, who allow the possibility. And all of the traditionists say it is possible for any upright person of piety and faith.⁵¹

As proof of this assertion that *mu'ǧīzāt* may come about at the hands of those who are not prophets, al-Mufid cites the examples of Mūsā's mother and Maryam bint 'Imrān.⁵² His view is that the revelation sent to Mūsā's mother was in itself a *mu'ǧīza*, and that one of the *mu'ǧīzāt* given to Maryam was that Allāh sent her nourishment (*rizq*).⁵³

Al-Mufid's statement that the traditionists (namely, the Sunna) hold that a *mu'ǧīza* can take place at the hands of any righteous Muslim is inaccurate: according to the Sunna, only a prophet can perform a *mu'ǧīza*. Although the Ṣūfī position is that a righteous person may be able to perform a miracle, this kind of miracle is called a *karāma*.⁵⁴

The opinion of most of the Mu'tazilites was that a *mu'ǧīza* is connected to a claim to prophethood. Those who held this opinion denied the existence of *karāmāt*.⁵⁵ Thus the deed performed by Āṣaf b. Baraḥyā⁵⁶ was not a *karāma* but a *mu'ǧīza* performed by Sulaymān, who was the prophet at that time.⁵⁷ This view of the Mu'tazila is based on the opinion that the appearance of *mu'ǧīzāt* at the hands of a person who

⁴⁹ See "Al-Nawbakhtī," *ET*², s.v. (J. L. Kraemer).

⁵⁰ About him, see "Ibn al-Iḥshīd," *ET*², s.v. (J. C. Vadet).

⁵¹ Mufid, *Awā'il*, pp. 40-41, translated by McDermott in McDermott, *Al-Shaikh al-Mufid*, p. 112.

⁵² According to Qur'an 28:7, Mūsā's mother was the recipient of revelation. Qur'an 19:25 tells of a dried palm tree that grew dates in a miraculous fashion for Maryam; see also "Maryam," *ET*², s.v. (A. J. Wensinck, P. Johnstone).

⁵³ Mufid, *Fuṣūl*, p. 36. Al-Ḥalabī is also of the opinion that the *rizq* given to Maryam was a miracle; see Ḥalabī, *al-Kāfi fī l-fiqh*, p. 103.

⁵⁴ Schmidtke, *Theology*, p. 162.

⁵⁵ See 'Abd al-Ġabbār's definition of a *mu'ǧīza*; McDermott, *al-Shaikh al-Mufid*, p. 85. For the Mu'tazilite opinion on *karāmāt*, see *Karāma*, pp. 615-616.

⁵⁶ See "Āṣaf b. Baraḥyā," *ET*², s.v. (A. J. Wensinck) and Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, p. 92. According to some commentators, Āṣaf b. Baraḥyā brought the throne of Bilqīs to Sulaymān in a miraculous fashion, as related in Qur'an 27:40; see Ṭabrisī, *Maḡma' al-bayān*, vol. 20, p. 226; Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* vol. 19, p. 163; Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, vol. 42, p. 169. About this incident, see also Lassner, J., *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba* (Chicago and London, 1993), pp. 58-59.

⁵⁷ Rāzī, *Barāhīm*, cited in Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 103.

is not a prophet impairs the unique status of the prophet and blemishes the miraculous character of the *mu'ǧīza*. Thus, those who held this opinion denied the possibility that Imams could perform *mu'ǧīzāt*.⁵⁸ But there were also those among the Mu'tazila, like Ibn al-Iḥshīd and Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, who affirmed the appearance of *mu'ǧīzāt* at the hands of one who is not a prophet.⁵⁹

Abū al-Ṣalāḥ Taqī al-Dīn b. Naǧm al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī (d. 447/1055-6)⁶⁰ states that the Imams' right to the Imamate is proved by the appearance of *mu'ǧīzāt* at their hands, just as the prophets' claim to prophecy is verified by their performance of *mu'ǧīzāt*. Like al-Mufīd, he bases this opinion on the traditions that tell of *mu'ǧīzāt* performed by the Imams and he cites the cases of Āṣaf b. Baraḥyā and Maryam.⁶¹ He further says that the *mu'ǧīzāt* performed by the Imams are directly connected to their claim to the Imamate (*muqṭarana bi-da'wāhum li-'l-imāma*).⁶² Al-Ḥalabī's position in this matter resembles that of the Sunna, in that he postulates a link between a *mu'ǧīza* and a claim, but with the essential difference that the claim is not a claim to prophecy, but to the Imamate. This point demonstrates most clearly the divergence between the Sunnī and Šī'ī views on the *mu'ǧīza*. According to the view presented by al-Ḥalabī, the purpose of a *mu'ǧīza* is to verify a claim of any kind.⁶³ This is indeed the opinion of al-Šarīf al-Murṭadā (d. 436/1044), who was al-Ḥalabī's teacher:

What points to the truth of our view is that miracles indicate the veracity of a claim corresponding to it. If a claimant makes a claim to prophethood with a miracle, it signifies his prophethood. If he makes a claim to the Imamate, it signifies his being an Imam. If he makes a claim to righteousness (*ṣalāḥ*), excellence and station, it indicates his veracity in this [claim]. Thus, there must inevitably be a clear or conclusive claim corresponding to all [three types of miracles].⁶⁴

This opinion is extreme in that it allows the performance of a *mu'ǧīza* not only by a prophet or Imam, but also by any righteous person who presents a claim of any kind (although there are those who restrict such a possibility).⁶⁵ This view obviously contradicts the Sunnī position that

⁵⁸ Hillī, *Anwār*, p. 49; Schmidtke, *Theology*, p. 159.

⁵⁹ Mufīd, *Awā'il*, pp. 40-41; Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 98; (Pseudo.) al-Ardabīlī, *Ḥadiqat al-šī'a*, cited in Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 39; Schmidtke, *Theology*, p. 160.

⁶⁰ About him, see *Da'ir'a*, vol. 17, p. 247; *A'yān al-šī'a*, vol. 14, pp. 192-195.

⁶¹ Ḥalabī, *al-Kāfi fī l-fiqh*, pp. 101-103.

⁶² Ibid., p. 100.

⁶³ This is also al-Mufīd's opinion; see Mufīd, *Fuṣūl*, p. 36.

⁶⁴ Schmidtke, *Theology*, pp. 162-163.

⁶⁵ See the opinion of al-Hillī, who does accept the existence of a general capability to perform *mu'ǧīzāt*; Hillī, *Kaṣf al-murād*, p. 277.

a *mu'ǧiza* can only be performed by one who claims to be a prophet.

In *Kašf al-murād fi šarḥ taǧrīd al-i'tiqād*⁶⁶ al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) responds to those who refute the Šrī position that the miracles performed by the Imams are *mu'ǧizāt*. He cites cases in which *mu'ǧizāt* appeared at the hands of people who were not prophets, such as Āṣaf b. Baraḥyā and Maryam.⁶⁷ He refutes the opinion that an abundance of *mu'ǧizāt* harms the miraculous character of the *mu'ǧiza* by saying that the loss of this miraculous nature would be despicable (*qabīḥ*) and it is impossible that any aspect of the *mu'ǧiza* could become despicable. He further states that just as the appearance of many *mu'ǧizāt* at the hands of prophets does not undermine their value, so the value of the *mu'ǧizāt* is not diminished when brought about by a person who is not a prophet. According to al-Ḥillī, the true sign of prophet is not his ability to perform a *mu'ǧiza* but his claim to prophecy which accompanies it.⁶⁸ This is a logical development of al-Šarīf al-Murṭadā's opinion, according to which the purpose of a *mu'ǧiza* is to verify any claim, since if both a prophet and a person who is not a prophet can perform a *mu'ǧiza*, there must be another criterion by which to distinguish between the two. According to al-Ḥillī, the ability to perform a *mu'ǧiza* is not what sets a prophet apart from other men; likewise, someone who is not a prophet and performs a *mu'ǧiza* does not necessarily have any of the qualities unique to a prophet.⁶⁹

Among the Šr'a, only Banū Nawbaḥt denied the Imams' *mu'ǧizāt*, but their impact on Šrī thought and doctrine is marginal. There is a work attributed to Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Nawbaḥt in which the author expresses an opinion similar to that of the accepted Šrī position,⁷⁰ but this work was probably written at a later date and does not reflect the views of the school that al-Mufīd is referring to when he mentions the Banū Nawbaḥts' position on miracles.⁷¹

⁶⁶ For *Kašf al-murād*, see *Darī'a*, vol. 18, p. 60.

⁶⁷ Ḥillī, *Kašf al-murād*, p. 276. Al-Ḥillī also adduces these examples in *Anwār*, p. 187.

⁶⁸ Ḥillī, *Kašf al-murād*, p. 276, cited in Gramlich, *Wunder*, pp. 109-110.

⁶⁹ Ḥillī, *Kašf al-murād*, p. 277, cited in Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 110.

⁷⁰ The author states that the appearance of *mu'ǧizāt* at the hands of the Imams is possible and that this is proved by the miracles of Āṣaf b. Baraḥyā and Maryam; see Ḥillī, *Anwār*, p. 186.

⁷¹ The title of this work is *al-Yāqūt fi ʿilm al-kalām*. According to *Darī'a*, this book was written by the *mutakallim* Abū Ishāq Ismāʿīl b. Ishāq b. Abī Sahl al-Faḍl b. Abī Sahl who lived in the time of Imam al-Riḍā (d. 202/818), but ʿAbbās Iqbāl dates this work as being written at the time of the Major Occultation (329/941). Al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī wrote a commentary on this book entitled *Anwār al-malakūt fi šarḥ al-Yāqūt*. In the introduction, he identifies the author of the book as Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Nawbaḥt;

The case of Maryam bint ʿImrān is mentioned several times in various sources and may be used to demonstrate the different views regarding miracles. According to the Qurʾānic story, Maryam gave birth to ʿĪsā at the foot of a dessicated palm tree, after which the tree suddenly yielded fruit from which she ate. According to Sunnī opinion, this occurrence can be considered either a *karāma* brought about for Maryam or an *irhās*⁷² of ʿĪsā.⁷³ Those among the Muʿtazila who denied the existence of *karāmāt* consider this to be a *muʿǧiza* of Zakarīyā, who was the prophet at the time.⁷⁴ One can assume that those Muʿtazilites who accepted the possibility of non-prophetic *muʿǧizāt* would have considered this occurrence a *muʿǧiza*, *karāma* or *irhās*.⁷⁵ The Šīʿa considers this event a *muʿǧiza* of Maryam,⁷⁶ although there are those who attribute it to ʿĪsā.⁷⁷

The use made by the Šīʿa of the term *muʿǧiza* to describe an Imāmī miracle⁷⁸ obviously precludes the use of the term *karāma*, and *karāma* is never used in Šīʿī works to denote a miracle performed by an Imam.⁷⁹ Apart from the fact that the Šīʿa creates a link between prophetic and Imāmī miracles by using the same term for both acts, there are several reasons that make it impossible for the Šīʿa to accept the term *karāma* as describing an Imāmī miracle. Most of the characteristics of the *karāma* described above go against the concept of the Imāmī miracle: if the purpose of the Imāmī miracle is to prove the Imams' right to the Imamate, it cannot be kept secret, as the *karāma* is supposed to be.⁸⁰ Therefore, one cannot say of the Imāmī miracle that it is meant

see *Darīʿa*, vol. 25, pp. 217-272, vol. 2, pp. 444-445. According to Madelung, the author of *al-Yāqūt* is Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Nawbaḥt, about whom he says nothing is known. He estimates that the book was written about a century later than the date given by Iqbāl; see Madelung, W., "Imamism and Muʿtazilite Theology," in *Le Shiʿisme Imamite*, Colloque de Strasbourg (1968) (Paris, 1970), p. 15.

⁷² *Irhās*—a miracle that appears at the hands of a prophet before he is summoned to the prophetic mission; Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 109. According to al-Ḥillī, those who deny the existence of *karāmāt* also deny the existence of the *irhās*. Al-Ḥillī says that based on traditions relating miracles that appeared at the hands of the Prophet before he began to receive revelations, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī affirmed the existence of the *irhās*; Ḥillī, *Kaṣf al-murād*, p. 277.

⁷³ *Rāzi*, *al-Taḥṣīr al-kabīr*, vol. 21, pp. 175-176.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Maǧlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 14, p. 224.

⁷⁶ Ḥillī, *Kaṣf al-murād*, p. 276.

⁷⁷ (Pseudo-) al-Ardabīlī, *Ḥadiqat al-šīʿa*, cited in Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 39.

⁷⁸ Namely, a miracle performed by an Imam.

⁷⁹ Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, p. 91.

⁸⁰ There is a certain conflict between the idea that the Imāmī *muʿǧiza* should be revealed and the concept of *taqīyya*; I shall discuss this below.

only for the person at whose hands it appears or that it appears independently of this person's volition, as in the case of the *karāma*. *Karāma* denotes an act which is considered inferior to a *mu'ǧiza* and its usage in relation to the Imams would undermine their status; hence it is clear that not only does the Šī'a have cause to use the word *mu'ǧiza* to describe an Imāmī miracle, it also has good reason to reject the term *karāma*.

The Sunnī position is that the *mu'ǧiza* is proof of divinely sanctioned prophecy, therefore only a true prophet can perform a *mu'ǧiza*. The Imāmiyya does not claim that the Imams are prophets and does not seek to undermine Muḥammad's status as Seal of the Prophets.⁸¹ To be able to use the term *mu'ǧiza* to denote an Imāmī miracle, the Šī'a must sever the exclusive link that exists between prophecy and the *mu'ǧiza* in Sunnī thought. This is attained by stating that the purpose of the *mu'ǧiza* is not to prove the veracity of one who claims to be a prophet, but to prove every truthful claim. The Šī'ī position is that the purpose of the *mu'ǧiza* is to prove the Imams' right to the Imamate, in the same way that it proves the prophets' claim to prophethood. Even those among the Šī'a who do not consider the *mu'ǧiza* a necessary condition for the proof of the Imams' claim do not refute the opinion that the Imams indeed performed *mu'ǧizāt*. The prophet is unique in his claim to prophecy which accompanies the *mu'ǧiza*, and not in the *mu'ǧiza* itself. This position enables the Šī'a to attribute to the Imams the ability to perform *mu'ǧizāt* without detracting from the Prophet's unique and singular status.

II. Knowledge-related Miracles

Many traditions attest to the unique character of the Imam's knowledge: they are the wisest and most knowledgeable of people,⁸² their knowledge is equal to that of the angels and prophets⁸³ and they even have an advantage over them, as there are things known only to the Imams.⁸⁴ The Imams can renew their knowledge and increase it⁸⁵ and nothing is hidden from them.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis*, pp. 140-141.

⁸² Ibn Bābawayh, *ʿUyūn aḥbār al-Riḍā* and *Maʿanī al-aḥbār*, cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 25, p. 116, no. 1.

⁸³ Qummī, *Baṣāʾir*, p. 109, no. 2.

⁸⁴ Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis*, pp. 145-147.

⁸⁵ Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, pp. 70-71.

⁸⁶ Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 26, *bāb* 6.

The Imam's knowledge is derived from a number of sources. One of these is divine inspiration: the Imam is a *muḥaddaṭ* and can hear the voices of angels.⁸⁷ The Imam also has a number of written sources at his disposal, such as the *Ṣaḥīfa*,⁸⁸ which includes knowledge of all that is allowed and forbidden; *muṣḥaf Fāṭima*, which was revealed by ʿĠibrīl after the Prophet's death; *al-Ġafr*, which includes several books (such as the *tawrāt* and the *inǧīl*).⁸⁹ These sources are sometimes mentioned in the various traditions that tell of the Imams' knowledge, but not always.⁹⁰

The knowledge derived from these sources is usually of an esoteric nature and lies at the root of the Imams' ability to perform miracles.⁹¹ The focus of this section, however, is not miracles which are brought about by activating this esoteric knowledge, but rather miracles concerning knowledge of a more practical nature. In traditions of this kind, the information at the Imam's disposal is the focus of the miracle, as opposed to information which enables him to perform a miracle. In other words, in these cases, the knowledge is an aim in itself and not the means to an aim.

According to some of these traditions, the Imam can read the minds of those surrounding him.⁹² A recurrent pattern in traditions of this sort is one in which the Imam answers questions before they have been asked. One such tradition tells of a group of people who set out on a pilgrimage and among them was one ʿĀʾid b. al-Aḥmasī,⁹³ who wanted

⁸⁷ According to the Šrī doctrine of the *muḥaddaṭ*, the Imam can hear angels but cannot see them, and the information he obtains in this manner is not revelation (*wahy*) but inspiration (*ilhām*). The Imam's inability to see angels and the fact that he is not the recipient of revelation sets him apart from the Prophet in this respect. See Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, pp. 70-71; E. Kohlberg, "The Term 'Muḥaddath' in Twelver Šrīsm," in *Studia Orientalia memoriae D. H. Baneth dedicata* (Jerusalem, 1979), pp. 39-40, repr. in E. Kohlberg, *Belief and Law in Imāmī Šrīsm*, Variorum reprints (Aldershot, 1991), art. V.

⁸⁸ Or *al-Muṣḥaf*, *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-ǧāmiʿa*, *al-Ġāmiʿa*.

⁸⁹ Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, pp. 72-73. For a detailed survey of the written sources of the Imam's knowledge, see E. Kohlberg, "Authoritative Scriptures in Early Imāmī Šrīsm," in *Les Retours aux Écritures: Fondamentalismes Présents et Passés*. E. Patlagean, and A. Le Boulluec, eds. (Paris, 1991), pp. 297-307.

⁹⁰ For an example of a tradition which the *Ṣaḥīfa* is explicitly mentioned, see Qummī, *Bayāʾir*, p. 172, no. 5, cited in Maǧlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 66, no. 8. For a version of the same tradition in which the *Ṣaḥīfa* is not mentioned, see Qummī, *Bayāʾir*, p. 257, no. 2, cited in Maǧlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 77, no. 47 and Rāwandī, *Harāʾiǧ*, vol. 1, pp. 305-306, no. 9.

⁹¹ Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, p. 91.

⁹² See also Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, p. 93.

⁹³ ʿĀʾid b. Nabāta/Nubāta al-Aḥmasī; see Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ*, no. 6126.

to ask al-Ṣādiq a question. When the group entered the Imam's house, he turned to them before they spoke and said, "He who gives to God that which is incumbent upon him, let him not ask for more," and pointed at al-Aḥmasī. When the people had left the Imam's house, they asked al-Aḥmasī what he had intended to ask al-Ṣādiq. His answer was that he did not usually pray in the middle of the night and he was afraid that he would be punished.⁹⁴ Another version of this tradition tells of someone⁹⁵ who wanted to ask al-Ṣādiq about the nightly prayer and even though he forgot the question, the Imam answered him.⁹⁶

Many of the traditions in which the Imam answers a question before it is asked deal with legal issues, like the tradition above. Another tradition of this kind tells that Šihāb b. 'Abd Rabbihi⁹⁷ wanted to ask the Imam a question concerning ritual impurity. The Imam turned to him before he had spoken ("ibtada'anī") and said to him, "Šihāb, ask what you will, but if you wish, I will tell why you have come." Šihāb asked al-Ṣādiq to tell him why he had come to him and the Imam said, "You have come to ask about one who is impure who pours water and his hand touches it." Šihāb affirmed that was indeed what he had meant to ask and the Imam assured him that the water was not unclean. This pattern in which the Imam tells Šihāb his question and answers it recurs another three times in this tradition.⁹⁸ Here too there is a version of this tradition in which Šihāb forgets his question and the Imam answers him regardless.⁹⁹

Another tradition tells that Dāwūd b. A'yan¹⁰⁰ reflected upon the verse, "I did not create the Jinn and the men but that they should worship me,"¹⁰¹ and wanted to ask al-Ṣādiq how it was possible that despite this verse there were those who did not worship Allāh.

⁹⁴ Qummī, *Bayā'ir*, p. 239, no. 15; Rāwandī, *Harā'ig*, vol. 2, pp. 731-732, no. 38. See also Kulīnī, *al-Kāfi*, vol. 3, p. 487, no. 3. For a similar case in which the Imam answered a question which had not yet been asked, see also Rāwandī, *Harā'ig*, vol. 2, p. 752, no. 68, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 119, no. 161.

⁹⁵ Identified here as Nabāta al-Aḥmasī (probably a typographical error for al-Aḥmasī), possibly the father of the al-Aḥmasī mentioned in the tradition above.

⁹⁶ Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 353. See also al-Ṭabrisī, *Flām al-warā*, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 150-151, no. 207.

⁹⁷ About him, see Ardabilī, *Ġāmi' al-ruwāt*, vol. 1, pp. 402-403, no. 329; Najāšī, *Riḡāl*, vol. 1, pp. 436-437, no. 521.

⁹⁸ *Bayā'ir*, pp. 238-239, no. 13, cited in *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 69, no. 18. See also Rāwandī, *Harā'ig*, vol. 2, pp. 644-645, no. 53 and Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 347.

⁹⁹ Qummī, *Bayā'ir*, p. 236, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 80, pp. 15-16, no. 3.

¹⁰⁰ See the short entry about him in Māmaqānī, *Tanqīh*, no. 3823.

¹⁰¹ Qur'an 51:56.

Dāwūd arrived at al-Šādiq's house and was about to enter when he heard al-Šādiq reciting this verse and after it the verse, "Do you not know that perhaps Allah will bring something new."¹⁰² From this Dāwūd concluded that the verse he wanted to inquire about had been abrogated.¹⁰³

These traditions show that the Imam's ability to read the thoughts of others and to anticipate their questions transcends the limitations of time and space: the Imam can know a person's thoughts, even if he himself has forgotten them. This is possible even when they are not near each other. A recurrent element in these traditions which emphasises the Imam's ability to anticipate questions is the *ibtidā'* – when the Imam initiates the response to a question that has not yet been asked.¹⁰⁴

The Imam can know about things that happen in his absence. One tradition tells that Abū Kahmas¹⁰⁵ was staying in a house where there was a beautiful girl. One night, when returning home, she opened the door for him and he reached out and touched her breast. When he met al-Šādiq the next morning, the Imam told him that he must ask forgiveness for this deed.¹⁰⁶

The Imam can know the thoughts and desires of people who are not in his vicinity. This is demonstrated in a tradition that tells of someone who came to visit al-Šādiq and the Imam inquired after his brother who belonged to the Ġārūdiyya.¹⁰⁷ The man answered that his brother had not yet recognised al-Šādiq as the Imam, because of his extreme

¹⁰² Qurʾān 65:1.

¹⁰³ Al-Irbilī, *Kaṣf al-ġumma*, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 148, no. 203. There are also traditions in which al-Šādiq knows the question before being asked, but refuses to answer, see, for example, Qummī, *Baṣāʾir*, p. 235, no. 4, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 67, no. 10.

¹⁰⁴ A common form is *ibtidāʾ anī*, see, for example, Qummī, *Baṣāʾir*, p. 242, no. 26, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 71, no. 27 or Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, p. 736, no. 48. Another phrase which appears several times is "he said without being asked," (*[wa-qāla] min ġayr masaʾala*); see, Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 346, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 84, no. 77.

¹⁰⁵ Or Kahmas; see Ardabīlī, *Ġāmiʿ al-nuṣaṭ*, vol. 2, p. 412, no. 3072; Naḡāšī, *Riḡāl*, vol. 2, p. 402, no. 1171.

¹⁰⁶ Qummī, *Baṣāʾir*, p. 242, no. 1, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 71, no. 28. See also Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, p. 728, no. 32. For further traditions that tell of al-Šādiq's ability to know of others' transgressions, see Qummī, *Baṣāʾir*, p. 243, no. 3, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 72, no. 32, and Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, p. 729, no. 34. See also Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, p. 610, no. 4 and Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 368.

¹⁰⁷ A group among the early Zaydiyya; see Halm, *Shiʿism*, p. 206; Muḥammad al-Šahrastānī, *Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects.*, W. Cureton, ed. (London, 1846), pp. 118-119; "Djārūdiyya," *ET*², s.v. (M. G. S. Hodgson).

piety. Al-Šādiq told him to ask his brother about his piety during the night he spent next to the Balḥ river.¹⁰⁸ The man did so and his brother told him that once on his travels, he had accompanied another traveller who had a slave-girl. One night near the Balḥ river, he slept with the girl and told no one of it. He was astonished to find out that al-Šādiq knew of this incident and this convinced him to recognise his Imamate.¹⁰⁹ This ability of al-Šādiq is not limited to recent incidents; there are traditions according to which al-Šādiq knew about transgressions that had been committed twenty¹¹⁰ or forty years ago.¹¹¹

Attempts to hide things from the Imam are to no avail, as demonstrated by the following tradition: someone who wished to prove the Imam's abilities sent one thousand *dirhams* to al-Šādiq with Šu'ayb al-ʿAqarqūqī.¹¹² He told Šu'ayb to take five *dirhams* and to substitute them with five counterfeit coins. Šu'ayb did this and when he gave the money to al-Šādiq, the Imam spread out the money, held up the five counterfeit coins and said, "These are your five, give us our five." Another tradition about the same Šu'ayb tells that he arrived at al-Šādiq's house with ʿAlī b. Abī Ḥamza¹¹³ and Abū Baṣīr.¹¹⁴ Šu'ayb gave the Imam three hundred *dīnārs*, but al-Šādiq took only part of the money and told him to return the rest to where it belonged. Abū Baṣīr asked him about this and Šu'ayb replied that he had taken a hundred *dīnārs* from his brother without his permission. Abū Baṣīr's reaction was, "Al-Šādiq has given you a sign that he is a [true] Imam" (*aʿtāka Abū ʿAbdallāh ʿalāmat al-imāma*). Šu'ayb then counted the money that al-Šādiq had

¹⁰⁸ A river in Ḥurāsān near the city of Balḥ; about Balḥ see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, vol. 1, pp. 479-480.

¹⁰⁹ Qummī, *Baṣāʾir*, pp. 249-250, no. 16, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 75-76, no. 43. See also Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, pp. 617-619, no. 17, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 156-157, no. 220.

¹¹⁰ Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 1, p. 298, no. 5. This tradition also tells of an incident near the Balḥ river.

¹¹¹ Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 370. This tradition is also connected to the Balḥ river.

¹¹² Or al-ʿAqarqūfī; a relative of ʿAlī b. Abī Ḥamza, see about him in Ardabīlī, *Ġāmiʿ al-nuṣāṭ*, vol. 1, pp. 400-401, no. 3272.

¹¹³ ʿAlī b. Abī Ḥamza was one of the leaders of the *Wāqifa* and was known to be a guide (*qāʾid*) of Abū Baṣīr Yaḥyā b. al-Qāsim (about whom see below); See Ardabīlī, *Ġāmiʿ al-nuṣāṭ*, vol. 1, pp. 547-551, no. 4501; Naḡāṣī, *Riḡāl*, vol. 2, p. 69, no. 654.

¹¹⁴ Al-Šādiq had four followers with the *kunya* of Abū Baṣīr: Layth b. al-Baḥtarī/Buḥturī al-Murādī, Yaḥyā b. Abī al-Qāsim, Yūsuf b. al-Ḥārith and ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad al-ʿAsadī; see *Riḡāl al-Hilt*, pp. 392-393 and Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, n. 182. In this case, the person identified as Abū Baṣīr is probably Yaḥyā b. Abī al-Qāsim, since he appears here with ʿAlī b. Abī Ḥamza, and with Šu'ayb, to whom he was related.

given back and there were exactly a hundred *dīnārs*.¹¹⁵ In these last two traditions, al-Šādiq's ability to discover the truth constitutes proof of his Imamate.

Another tradition tells that Abū Baṣīr wanted to obtain proof (*dalāla*) from al-Šādiq that he indeed was the true Imam, and so came to see him in a state of ritual impurity. Al-Šādiq asked him why he had come before his Imam when unclean and Abū Baṣīr answered that he had done it on purpose. Al-Šādiq asked him, "Do you not believe?" and Abū Baṣīr replied, "Yes, but that my heart may be at rest."¹¹⁶

This dialogue between al-Šādiq and Abū Baṣīr is identical to one that takes place in the Qur'ān¹¹⁷ between Allāh and Ibrāhīm regarding Allāh's ability to raise the dead. It is no coincidence that this dialogue is replicated here, as it serves to create a link between a miraculous act which occurs in the Qur'ān and al-Šādiq's ability to find out Abū Baṣīr's intentions. It is also possible that the use of this dialogue is meant to refute any possible criticism of Abū Baṣīr's scepticism; if Ibrāhīm was allowed to doubt, Abū Baṣīr can hardly be criticised for doing the same.

Events taking place in far-away places are also known to the Imam. A tradition tells that Abū Maṣṣūr (ruled 136-158/754-775) sent Muḥammad b. al-Aṣ'at al-Ḥuzā'ī's¹¹⁸ uncle to Medina and told him to give money to 'Abdallāh b. Ḥasan¹¹⁹ and his family. He further instructed him to say that the money had been sent from Šīrīs in Ḥurāsān and to request that every person who takes money confirm this with a signature. The messenger did all this and when he returned to al-Manṣūr, he told him that he had not obtained al-Šādiq's signature. He said that al-Šādiq had refused to take the money, and that when the messenger expressed his surprise, al-Šādiq told him in great detail about the instructions given to him by al-Manṣūr. When al-Manṣūr heard this he said, "Know that there is no prophecy among

¹¹⁵ Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, p. 632, no. 33, cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, p. 105, no. 131.

¹¹⁶ Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 353, cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, p. 129, no. 176. For a shorter version, see Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, pp. 634-635, no. 35.

¹¹⁷ Qur'ān 2:260.

¹¹⁸ Al-Ḥuzā'ī was governor of Egypt in 141-143/758-760; see P. Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 184-185.

¹¹⁹ The father of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and Ibrāhīm who revolted against the 'Abbāsids in 145/762, see Kennedy, *Al-Manṣūr*, p. 135, note 455.

ahl al-bayt, but there is among them a *muḥaddaṭ*; Ġaʿfar al-Šādiq is our *muḥaddaṭ* and this is the proof.¹²⁰

The Imam's unique knowledge is not restricted to knowledge of others' thoughts and deeds. According to some traditions, the Imam knew various languages, such as Turkish,¹²¹ Persian,¹²² Hebrew¹²³ and Nabatean.¹²⁴ A particularly interesting tradition tells of group of people who came to speak to al-Šādiq. When they left him, an argument broke out among them, since five¹²⁵ of them had understood the Imam in five different languages: Arabic, Persian, Nabatean, Etheopic and the Šaqlabī language.¹²⁶ When they returned to al-Šādiq to ask him about this, he told them that the content of what he had said was the same, but it had been explained to each of them in their own language.¹²⁷ Apart from implying that the Imam knew all these languages, it seems as if al-Šādiq managed to convey his words in a such way that each of the people listening heard them in a different language-without being at all aware that this was happening.

The Imam also has knowledge of future events, as shown in the following tradition: Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd¹²⁸ was on his way to Qubā¹²⁹ to buy palm trees when he met al-Šādiq. When the Imam heard where he was headed, he warned him of the danger of locusts, and as a result,

¹²⁰ Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, pp. 720-721, no. 25. See also Qummī, *Baṣāʾir*, p. 245, no. 7, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 74-75, no. 39 and *al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 475, no. 6 and Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 348. For further examples of al-Šādiq's ability to know of events happening far away, see Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, p. 644, no. 52, and also al-Irbilī, *Kaṣf al-ḡumma*, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 147, no. 203.

¹²¹ Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, p. 759, no. 77, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 119, no. 163. See also Qummī, *Baṣāʾir*, p. 338, no. 3.

¹²² *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, p. 753, no. 70, cited in *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 119, no. 162. See also Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, p. 346, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 84, no. 77.

¹²³ Qummī, *Baṣāʾir*, pp. 333-334, no. 3, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 81, no. 68.

¹²⁴ Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, pp. 346-347, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 80-81. In this tradition al-Šādiq says that he is fluent in all languages. For al-Mufid's opinion on the Imams' abilities to speak many languages, see Mufid, *Awāʾil*, pp. 37-38 and Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, p. 93.

¹²⁵ Or fifteen, according to the version in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*.

¹²⁶ See "Šaḡālība," *EI*², s.v. (P. B. Golden).

¹²⁷ Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, pp. 615-616, no. 14, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 99, no. 117.

¹²⁸ See about him in Ardabīlī, *Ġamīʿ al-ruwāt*, vol. 1, pp. 23-25, no. 118; Najāšī, *Riḡāl*, vol. 1, pp. 98-99, no. 26.

¹²⁹ A town in the vicinity of Medina; see Yāqūt, *Muḡam*, vol. 4, pp. 301-302. See also M. Lecker, *Muslims, Jews and Pagans: Studies on Early Islamic Medina* (Leiden, 1995), p. 133.

Ibrāhīm decided not to purchase the palm trees. Shortly afterwards, a swarm of locusts arrived and caused great damage to the trees.¹³⁰

The Imam also knows the contents of other people's dreams¹³¹ and their interpretation: Abū 'Amāra¹³² told al-Ṣādiq that he had seen a spear in a dream. Al-Ṣādiq said that if the spear had iron at its tip, a son would have been born to him, but since he did not see this, he will have a daughter. He asked Abū 'Amāra how many knots were in the spear. When he replied that there were twelve, al-Ṣādiq told him that his daughter would have twelve daughters. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā¹³³ told this story to 'Abbās b. Walīd,¹³⁴ who after hearing it, said, "I am [the son of] one of them; I have eleven aunts and Abū 'Amāra is my mother's grandfather."¹³⁵

The Imam's special knowledge is not limited to the world of humans and he can also understand the speech of animals. A tradition tells that Sulaymān b. Ḥālid¹³⁶ was with al-Ṣādiq and Abū 'Abdallāh al-Balḥī¹³⁷ when they met a deer. The deer approached the Imam and wagged its tail, and al-Ṣādiq said, "I will do so, with God's will." The Imam then told the two that the deer's mate had been caught by hunters and that she has fawns too young to graze. The Imam said that the deer had asked him to secure the release of his mate, and promised to send her back to the hunters as soon as the fawns were old enough to graze alone. The Imam made the deer swear to this in the name of his loyalty (*walāya*) to *ahl al-bayt*. When al-Balḥī heard that al-Ṣādiq had understood the deer, he said to him, "your *sunna* is like the *sunna* of Sulaymān" (*sunna fikum ka-sunnat Sulaymān*).¹³⁸ *Sunna* in this context means practice or custom, and it probably is used here to show that

¹³⁰ Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 355, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 131, no. 180.

¹³¹ Ṭūsī, *Amālī*, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 63-64, no. 2.

¹³² Abū 'Amāra al-Ṭayyār or al-Ṭayān; see Ardabīlī, *Ġāmi' al-ruwāt*, vol. 2, p. 406, no. 2994.

¹³³ Unidentified.

¹³⁴ About him see Naḡāšī, *Riḡāl*, vol. 2, p. 122, no. 746.

¹³⁵ Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, pp. 638-639, no. 43, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 22, no. 21.

¹³⁶ See Ardabīlī, *Ġāmi' al-ruwāt*, vol. 1, pp. 377-379, no. 3085; Naḡāšī, *Riḡāl*, vol. 1, pp. 412-413, no. 482.

¹³⁷ Unidentified.

¹³⁸ Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, p. 349, no. 8, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 86-87, no. 86; Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 364. See also Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 1, p. 299, part of no. 5 (one out of several miracles that al-Ṣādiq performs in the presence of al-Balḥī). According to a note in Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, a variant of this tradition has *sunnat Maryam* instead of *sunnat Sulaymān*.

the appearance of a miracle at the hands of the Imam is a part of the Imam's custom, just as it was part of Sulaymān's. In the Qur'ān Sulaymān is credited with the ability to understand the speech of animals¹³⁹ and this comment of al-Balḥī's creates yet another link between a prophetic miracle and an Imāmī miracle. Like the Qur'ānic dialogue which appeared in one of the traditions mentioned above, the use of the phrase *sunnat Sulaymān* serves to strengthen the status of the Imāmī miracle.

Another tradition tells that a certain Ġābir¹⁴⁰ was in the company of al-Šādiq when they came across a man who was about to slaughter a goat and heard it bleating. Al-Šādiq purchased the goat and set it free. They then saw a falcon attacking a francolin and it cried out. The Imam pointed at it and it swerved away from the francolin. Ġābir asked the Imam about these two incidents and the Imam said that when the goat saw him, it said: "I seek refuge with Allāh and with you *ahl al-bayt* (as protection) against what he (the man) is about to do to me," and that the francolin had said the same. Al-Šādiq added, "If [the people] of our Šī'a followed the straight path (*wa-law anna šī'atanā istaqāmat*), I would let them hear the speech of birds."¹⁴¹ This implies that most of the Šī'a are not worthy of witnessing the Imam's miracles, a fact that raises the standing of those who were lucky enough to be allowed to see al-Šādiq's miracles. Another element which is hinted at here is the *taqīyya*, according to which the Imam's miracles should be kept secret.

A different aspect of al-Šādiq's powers is revealed in the following tradition in which 'Abdallāh b. Yahyā al-Kāhili¹⁴² tells that al-Šādiq had asked him what he would do if he ever came across a dangerous animal. When 'Abdallāh said that he did not know, al-Šādiq said to him: "Recite *Āyat al-kursī*"¹⁴³ and say: 'I beseech you in the name of the

¹³⁹ Qur'ān 27:16, 19.

¹⁴⁰ Unidentified.

¹⁴¹ Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, p. 616, no. 15, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 99-100, no. 1. For other traditions which demonstrate the Imam's ability to understand animals' speech, see Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, p. 342, no. 4, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 85, no. 80. See also Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, p. 345, no. 20, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 86, no. 85 and Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 346 or Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, p. 344, no. 15, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 86, no. 84. About this ability of the Imams', see also Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, p. 93.

¹⁴² About him see Ardabili, *Ġāmi' al-ruwāt*, vol. 1, pp. 517-518, no. 4174.

¹⁴³ Qur'ān 2:255.

will of Allāh (*‘azamtu*¹⁴⁴ *‘alayka bi-‘azīmat Allāh*) and of God’s Messenger and of Sulaymān b. Dāwūd and of Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī and the Imams after him, that you not stand in our way or harm us, as we will not harm you,’ and then he will retreat.” ‘Abdallāh relates that he was on his way from Kūfa to a village in the area with his cousin, when they came across a dangerous animal. He followed the Imam’s instructions and the animal went away. His cousin asked him what he had said, and he reported what al-Ṣādiq had told him to do in such a case. His cousin was greatly impressed and declared that he now recognised al-Ṣādiq’s Imamate. ‘Abdallāh later told al-Ṣādiq of this incident and the Imam’s answer was: “Do you think that I did not see you [. . .] with every *walī* I have an ear that hears and an eye that sees and a tongue that speaks [. . .] ‘Abdallāh, I swear by Allāh, I made it [the animal] leave you in peace.”¹⁴⁵

Most of the traditions concerning the Imam’s abilities to understand animals show that his benevolence is extended to animals; he can use his powers to assist them and protect them from humans. This last tradition shows that animals must also obey him and that the duty of loyalty to *ahl al-bayt* is not limited to the world of humans. This loyalty enables him to protect humans from animals, thus allowing him to function as an intermediary between the world of humans and the world of animals.

All these traditions re-inforce the view that the Imam’s knowledge is indeed unlimited. Attempts to conceal things from him are doomed to failure since he is omniscient. In many cases, this omniscience is used as a proof of the Imam’s Imamate and serves to enhance his special abilities and elevate his standing in the eyes of his followers.

III. *Miracles of Life and Death*

The Imam’s miracles are not only related to daily matters; it is within his ability to influence events of great significance. This ability is especially apparent in traditions that tell of the Imam’s power to exert his influence over matters of life and death.

¹⁴⁴ The root *‘zm.* has a magical meaning; *‘azama ‘alā* means to conjure someone to do a thing and the phrase *‘azā’im al-Qur’ān* refers to certain verses of the Qur’ān which have magical powers; see *Lane*, s.v.

¹⁴⁵ Rāwandī, *Ḥarā’iḡ*, vol. 2, pp. 607-608, no. 2, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 95, no. 108. See also Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 350.

One kind of miracle is related to al-Šādiq's ability to foresee a person's death. This can be seen in the following tradition: al-Šādiq told Abū Baṣīr to inform Abū Ḥamza¹⁴⁶ of the day of his death. Abū Baṣīr expressed his surprise at this announcement, saying that Abū Ḥamza is a good and loyal Šī'ī. Al-Šādiq's answer was that if a Šī'ī is in awe of God and does not sin, he will have the same status as the Imams in Paradise (in the Imam's words "*kāna ma'anā fī darağatinā*"). The tradition ends with Abū Baṣīr's statement that Abū Ḥamza died on the very day and hour predicted by al-Šādiq.¹⁴⁷

This traditions shows that not only can the Imam tell when a person will die, but also what his status in Paradise will be. This motif of promising rewards or a high standing in the next world appears in other traditions¹⁴⁸ and when the announcement of an impending death is accompanied by such promises, it acquires a soothing, and even positive, aspect.

The following tradition reflects more clearly the Imam's ability to foresee a person's standing in the next world: a man from *ahl al-Ğabal*¹⁴⁹ used to stay with al-Šādiq every year when performing the *ḥağğ*. One year he gave al-Šādiq some money and asked him to purchase a house for him. When he returned to Medina, the Imam gave him a contract which said that he had purchased a house for him in paradise adjacent to the houses of the Prophet, 'Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. Al-Šādiq also told him that he had taken the money and divided it among Ḥasan and Ḥusayn's descendents, in the hope that God would allow him into Paradise. The man returned home with the contract, and shortly afterwards became mortally ill. He called his family together and made them swear to bury him with the contract. After he died, they fulfilled

¹⁴⁶ Abū Ḥamza al-Tumālī is said to have met four Imams ('Alī Zayn al-Ābidīn, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Ġa'far al-Šādiq and Mūsā al-Kāzim), but there is a disagreement as to his date of death; one opinion is that he died in the days of Mūsā al-Kāzim; another opinion says that he died in 150/767, a fact which does not fit in with the above-quoted *ḥadīth*. See Ardabīlī, *Ġāmi' al-ruwāt*, vol. 2, pp. 134-153, no. 1072.

¹⁴⁷ Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, pp. 717-718, no. 19. See also Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, pp. 263-264, no. 6, cited in Mağlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 77-78, no. 52. A shorter version of this tradition appears in Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 349 and see the references in Amir-Moezzi, "Savior c'est pouvoir," p. 261, n. 46.

¹⁴⁸ I.e., Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, p. 265, no. 15, cited in Mağlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 78, no. 56. See also Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, p. 264, no. 8, Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 350 or Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, p. 714, no. 10.

¹⁴⁹ About al-Ğabal/al-Jibāl, see G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1905), pp. 185-186.

this wish. The morning after his burial, the man's family went to the cemetery and found the contract lying on the deceased's grave. On the contract were written the following words: "God's friend (*walī Allāh*) Ġa'far b. Muḥammad has kept his promise."¹⁵⁰

According to this tradition, not only can the Imam foresee a person's standing in the next world, he can also actively influence this future status.¹⁵¹ The miracle in this tradition has a double aspect: the Imam's ability to foresee the man's status in the next world is confirmed in a miraculous fashion.

There are also traditions which tell of the Imam's ability to foresee a death, but without the promise of reward in the next world. In these cases, it seems that the announcement of the approaching death constitutes a punishment. In one such tradition, Ḥusayn b. Abī al-'Alā¹⁵² tells that he was at al-Šādiq's house when a man came before the Imam and complained to him of his wife's behaviour. The Imam told him to bring her before him, and after asking her about her behaviour, he announced that she had three more days to live. Three days later, the man came back to see the Imam and al-Šādiq asked him what had happened to his wife. The man replied that he had just buried her. When Ḥusayn asked the Imam about the woman, he replied: "She behaved aggressively towards him [her husband], and so Allāh cut (*batara*) her life short and left him in peace."¹⁵³

In another tradition, 'Utmān b. 'Isā¹⁵⁴ tells of a man who came to see al-Šādiq and complained that he found the presence of his sister and cousins in his home disturbing. Al-Šādiq told him to be patient. A year later, the man came back with the same complaint and received the same answer. When he came back the third time, the Imam told him to be patient, as Allāh was about to alleviate his situation, and shortly afterwards, his family died. When he told al-Šādiq this, the Imam replied that they died because they had not obeyed him and had not treated him as one should treat a member of the family.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 359; see also Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 1, pp. 303-304, no. 7, both cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, p. 134, no. 183.

¹⁵¹ The Imam's ability to intercede in the sense of *šafā'a* is discussed below.

¹⁵² See about him in Naḡāšī, *Riḡāl*, vol. 1, p. 162, no. 116.

¹⁵³ Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 351, cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, p. 97, no. 112.

¹⁵⁴ See Naḡāšī, *Riḡāl*, vol. 2, pp. 155-156, no. 815.

¹⁵⁵ Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, pp. 637-638, no. 41, cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, p. 107, no. 134.

There are also traditions which show that the Imam can actively cause a person's death. Such a connection is clearer in the following tradition about Ḥammād b. ʿĪsā.¹⁵⁶ Ḥammād asked al-Šādiq to pray for him that, among other things, he would be able to perform the *ḥağğ* fifty times, and al-Šādiq indeed did so. When Ḥammād set out to the *ḥağğ* for the fifty-first time and was about to enter the area of the *Harām*, he entered a *wādī* near al-Ğuḥfa¹⁵⁷ to wash, was swept away and drowned. The manner of his death earned him the nickname of “The one who drowned at al-Ğuḥfa” (*ğariq al-Ğuḥfa*).¹⁵⁸ Even though al-Šādiq did not expressly forbid Ḥammād to go to the *ḥağğ* more than fifty times, his death may be understood as a punishment because he was not content with what he had been given. A different explanation which presents Ḥammād in a more positive light is that he wanted to die as a *šahīd* (and thereby attain a high status in the next world).¹⁵⁹

The following tradition shows beyond all doubt that the Imam has the power to cause another's death. This tradition tells that someone (who is not mentioned by name) informed al-Manšūr that al-Šādiq intended to rebel against him. Al-Šādiq was brought before al-Manšūr and he denied the allegation. When al-Manšūr presented him with the man who had informed against him, al-Šādiq said that he was lying. Al-Manšūr said that the man would take an oath and then he would be convinced of al-Šādiq's guilt. Al-Šādiq's reply was that if the man took a false oath, he would only be compounding his sin. Al-Manšūr ordered one of his servants to take an oath from the man, and he proceeded to do so, but al-Šādiq stopped him and asked to be allowed to take an oath from the man in a different manner. The Caliph agreed to this request and al-Šādiq told the man to say the following: “If I am lying about you, I hereby remove myself (*laqad bariʿtu*) from God's proximity and from his power and I seek refuge in my proximity and power,” and the man repeated his words. Al-Šādiq said: “Oh God, if he is lying, kill him,” and before he had finished speaking, the man fell down dead. He was taken away, and the Caliph, who no longer suspected al-Šādiq, let him go. After the Imam left, a group of people

¹⁵⁶ See Nağāšī, *Riğāl*, vol. 1, pp. 337-339, no. 368.

¹⁵⁷ See Yāqūt, *Muğam*, vol. 2, p. 111.

¹⁵⁸ Rāwandī, *Harāʾiğ*, vol. 1, pp. 304-305, no. 8, cited in Mağliṣī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 116-117, no. 153.

¹⁵⁹ For the status of one who dies while performing the *ḥağğ*, see “Shahīd,” *EF*², s.v. (E. Kohlberg).

gathered round the dead man and were discussing what had happened when suddenly he sat up, unveiled his face and began speaking. He said that he was being punished in the next world because of what he had done to al-Šādiq and warned those present of a similar fate. Afterwards, he lay down and became dead once more (*‘āda fī mawtihi*). When the people were convinced that he was indeed dead, he was taken away and buried.¹⁶⁰

There is no doubt that in this tradition the Imam had a major part in the man's death. This is exemplified by the man's instantaneous death, which reflects the God's granting of al-Šādiq's request. The man's testimony of his fate after death reinforces al-Šādiq's influence in this matter.

These traditions raise questions as to the precise nature of the Imam's powers regarding death. The miraculous nature of al-Šādiq's deeds is obviously based on his knowledge of future events in general, and in these cases, on the specific knowledge of an approaching death. This knowledge should not be treated lightly, as information regarding a person's death is regarded as one of the things known exclusively to God.¹⁶¹ Al-Šādiq's knowledge in this respect contradicts this view. Another issue is the extent of the Imam's involvement in bringing about death; the distinction between his ability to merely foresee a death and his ability to cause that death is not always clear. The question then is one of passive knowledge (and the conveying of this knowledge) as opposed to active involvement. Thus, in the tradition that tells of the woman who died three days after speaking to the Imam, it is not entirely clear if her death was a punishment meted out by the Imam, or whether her death was unrelated to her behaviour and the Imam merely informed her of her impending death.

The cases in which it is obvious that the Imam can bring about a person's death (as in the story of the man who took a false oath) raise questions regarding the doctrine of the *aḡal* (a person's life-span as determined by Allāh). If the assumption is that the term of a person's life is defined and fixed, there are two ways in which to explain the Imam's powers. One is that the Imam has the power to change a person's *aḡal*.

¹⁶⁰ Rāwandī, *Harā'ig*, vol. 2, pp. 763-765, no. 84.

¹⁶¹ Qur'ān 31:34: "[...] and no soul knows in which land it shall die [...]." For the interpretation of this verse as meaning the place of death, see Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 21, pp. 87-88. For an interpretation as it meaning the time of death, see Ṭabrisī, *Maḡma' al-bayān*, vol. 21, p. 70. See also Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis*, pp. 146-147.

This explanation is connected to the issue of passive knowledge versus active involvement, and is possible only if one accepts the assumption that the Imam indeed has the power to cause a death, thereby changing a person's *aḡal*.¹⁶² A second possibility, also based on the idea of the Imam's active influence, is that he is an agent of God and by causing a death, he is not actually changing a determined lifeterm. Whether or not the Imam's deeds constitute a change of the *aḡal*, it is clear that he is acting with God's help.

An event which demonstrates al-Šādiq's ability to foresee a death and to cause it is the case of Mu'allā b. Ḥunays. Mu'allā was a *mawla* of al-Šādiq who was executed by Dāwūd b. 'Alī¹⁶³ in 133/750 or between 145-146/762-763 and 148/765.¹⁶⁴ Al-Šādiq foresaw Mu'allā's death and warned him of it. He also told Abū Bašīr of Mu'allā's approaching death.¹⁶⁵ After Mu'allā's death, al-Šādiq punished Dāwūd b. 'Alī by causing his death. According to one tradition, a month after Mu'allā's death, Dāwūd summoned al-Šādiq to appear before him. The Imam refused, and Dāwūd ordered five of his guards to bring al-Šādiq to him and told them that if he refused to come, they must bring his head. The guards arrived at the Imam's house and ordered him to come with him. Al-Šādiq warned them that it would be better for them to leave him in peace. They refused to do so, and according to the testimony of those who witnessed this incident, al-Šādiq feared for his life. Abū Sinān,¹⁶⁶ who related this tradition describes what happened in the following words: "We saw that he [al-Šādiq] lifted his hands and put them on his shoulders, then he spread them out and made a gesture

¹⁶² There is an opinion according to which the *aḡal* is not fixed and can be changed; see the view of the early Mu'tazila in "Adjal," *EP*, s.v. (I. Goldziher, W. M. Watt).

¹⁶³ A cousin of al-Manšūr, the first 'Abbāsīd governor of Kūfa, d. 133/751; see Kennedy, *Al-Manšūr*, p. 131, n. 430.

¹⁶⁴ There are conflicting reports about the reason for his execution: some say that Mu'allā revealed the Šr'is' secrets and was punished; see Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, p. 402, no. 2, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 43, pp. 87-88, no. 91; others say that he was killed because he refused to divulge the names of the Imam's followers; see Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, pp. 352-353, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 129, no. 176. In this tradition, al-Šādiq says that Mu'allā will be rewarded with a high status in Paradise because of the manner of his death.

¹⁶⁵ See E. Kohlberg, "Taqiyya in Šr'i Theology and Religion," in *Secrecy and Concealment*, Kippenberg, H. G. and Stroumsa, G. G., eds. (Leiden, 1995), pp. 355-357.

¹⁶⁶ In Ardabīlī, *Ġamī' al-ruwāt*, Abū Sinān is identified as Abū Sāsān, a *kunya* indicating two people: Ḥuṣayn b. Mundīr and Hishām b. al-Sarā. The person here is most probably Hishām, who was said to have related traditions from al-Šādiq; see Ardabīlī, *Ġamī' al-ruwāt*, vol. 2, p. 317, no. 2244; p. 387, no. 2801.

with his finger and we heard him say, 'now, now'. Then we heard a loud cry and the guards said to him, 'get up!' He said to them, 'Your master is dead and that cry was on his account [. . .]', and they left. I said to him, "What has happened to him [Dāwūd]?" He said, 'He killed my *mawlā* Mu'allā b. Ḥunays and I did not appear before him for a whole month. He demanded that I come to him, and when the time came, I did not go to him and he sent [people] to me to behead me. So I called out to God with His Great Name (*da'awtu Allāha bi-ismihi al-a'zam*) and he sent an angel to me [. . .] and he killed him'."¹⁶⁷

It is evident that in this case, al-Ṣādiq caused Dāwūd's death as a punishment for killing Mu'allā. According to this tradition, one of the means of performing a miracle is the Great Name of God (*ism Allāh al-a'zam*). The knowledge of this name is one of the components of the Imam's special knowledge.¹⁶⁸ According to various traditions, this name is made up of seventy-three letters, some of which were revealed to various prophets, such as 'Īsā, Mūsā, Nūḥ and Ādam. Muḥammad was granted knowledge of seventy-two letters, which he passed on to the Imams; it is said that the remaining letter is known only to God. These letters have special powers which allow those who know them to perform miracles,¹⁶⁹ as shown here. This tradition demonstrates a miracle performed by a combination of the Imam's knowledge with a specific deed; al-Ṣādiq's unique knowledge, in this case, the letters of God's name, enables him to perform a miracle. Here the knowledge is a means to attain the aim of punishing Dāwūd.

Another aspect of the Imam's powers regarding matters of life and death are his abilities to heal the sick,¹⁷⁰ save the dying and revive the dead. One tradition tells that a young boy came to the Imam and told him that his mother had died. Al-Ṣādiq's answer was that she would not die. The boy replied that when he had left her, she had already been covered with shrouds. The Imam went with the boy to his home,

¹⁶⁷ Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, pp. 217-218, no. 2, cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, pp. 66-67, no. 9. For other traditions that tell of Dāwūd's death as caused by an angel sent by al-Ṣādiq, see Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'iḡ*, vol. 2, pp. 611-612, cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, p. 97, no. 113. Another tradition relates that Dāwūd was killed by a snake that came to him while he slept; Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 357. See additional references to the use of the Great Name of God in Amir-Moezzi, "Savoir c'est pouvoir," p. 260, n. 44.

¹⁶⁸ Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, p. 78.

¹⁶⁹ Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide*, p. 92.

¹⁷⁰ See, for example, Tūṣī, *Amālī*, cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, pp. 64-65, no. 4 or Abū 'Atāb 'Abdallāh b. Bistām b. Sābūr, *Tibb al-a'imma*, cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, pp. 121-122, no. 169.

and when they arrived, they found the boy's mother sitting up. The Imam told the boy to feed his mother and after she had eaten, he told him to say that the Imam orders her to make a will. She did so and died immediately afterwards.¹⁷¹

Another tradition tells that a woman told al-Šādiq that her son had died and that she had covered his face. The Imam told her that perhaps the child had not died, and told her to return to her house, purify herself, and pray to God to give her back her son. After praying, she was to wake her son up and not to tell a soul of what had happened. The woman followed the Imam's instructions, and the child indeed woke up.¹⁷²

These traditions raise the same questions as those about al-Šādiq's abilities to cause or foresee a death: are these cases in which the Imam knew that these people were not dead, or did he act in some way to save them? In the case of the mother who died, even if the Imam did perform some act of revival, the woman only lived for a very short time afterwards. In the child's case, it seems as if the Imam knew that he was not about to die, but we have no way of knowing if the Imam was directly and actively involved in saving the child. It is clear though, that here also the Imam is party to some knowledge regarding the *aḡal*. The Imam's injunction not to tell anyone about the child's revival (in other words, to obey the principle of *taqiyya*) would seem to indicate that this incident was highly unusual, a fact which serves to emphasize the unique nature of the Imam's knowledge and deeds. If we take these two cases as demonstrative of the Imam's ability to revive the dead, it can be seen that these powers are far-reaching: the Imam can affect people who are not in his presence. If they are understood in a more limited sense—miracles which are related only to knowledge and not to an active deed of revival—they demonstrate al-Šādiq's ability to know what is happening in other locations.

The full scope of the Imam's powers in this respect can be seen in the following tradition: a woman persuaded her husband to perform the *ḥaḡḡ*, but when the couple approached Medina, the woman became mortally ill. Her husband went to tell al-Šādiq (who is described as wearing a light yellow garment). After the Imam had heard of the

¹⁷¹ Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, pp. 614-615, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 98-99, no. 116.

¹⁷² Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, p. 272, no. 1, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 79, no. 61.

woman's plight, he was silent for some time and then calmed the man down, saying that he had prayed to Allāh to heal his wife, and that when he returned to his house, he would find her well, sitting up and eating. The man returned to his house and found the servant feeding his wife. He told her of his conversation with al-Ṣādiq, and she told him what had happened to her: after her husband had gone to see the Imam, a man wearing a light yellow garment entered the room and asked her how she was feeling. She had replied that she was about to die and that the Angel of Death had come to take her soul. The man addressed the Angel of Death, who answered: "I am at your service." The man asked the Angel: "Have you not been ordered to obey me?" The Angel answered in the affirmative and the man ordered him to postpone the woman's death by twenty years. The Angel obeyed him and they both left the woman, who immediately rose from her deathbed.¹⁷³

There are a few interesting points in this tradition. One is that it would seem that the Imam has the ability to be in two places at the same time. This is implied by two details: one is the mention of the colour of al-Ṣādiq's garment which is meant to show that the person who spoke to the Angel of Death was no other than the Imam himself. The other is the time-frame in which the events take place: according to the tradition, after the Imam heard that the woman was dying, he was silent for quite some time. The assumption is that during this time, he was standing by the woman's side and addressing the Angel of Death. The pace of the events within this time-frame create the impression that these things happened simultaneously.

Another ability which the Imam has, according to this tradition, is the power to see the Angel of Death and to speak to him. The Angel answered the Imam with the phrase *labbayka* and recognised him as the Imam.¹⁷⁴ This recognition goes to show that the Imam was indeed present, and the Angel's duty to obey him enabled him to intervene and alter the women's fate. The fact that the women saw the Angel of Death and heard the conversation between him and al-Ṣādiq is perhaps meant to emphasise how close she was to dying.

A similar ability to intervene is adduced in the following tradition: a man came to al-Ṣādiq and told him that he had taken a vow to

¹⁷³ Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 1, pp. 294-295, no. 2.

¹⁷⁴ This phrase expresses recognition of the Imam's status. See also M. J. Kister, "Labbayka, Allāhumma, Labbayka . . . On a monotheistic aspect of a Ḡāhiliyya practice," *JSAI* 2 (1980): 33-57.

perform the *ḥağğ* with his wife, but that when they arrived in Medina, she had died. The Imam told the man that his wife had not died, at which the man expressed surprise: he had already covered her in a shroud. He left the Imam and returned laughing. He told al-Šādiq that he had entered his house and found his wife sitting up. When al-Šādiq heard this, he turned to Dāwūd b. Kathīr al-Raqqī¹⁷⁵ who was present and said to him, “Do you not believe?” Dāwūd’s reply was, “Yes, but that my heart may be at rest.” When al-Šādiq participated later in the rituals of the *ḥağğ*, the man and his wife passed by the Imam and the wife saw him and said, “That is the man who intervened with Allāh on my behalf to bring me back to life” (*hādā alladī šafa’a ilā Allāh fi ihyā’i*).¹⁷⁶

The dialogue between al-Šādiq and Dāwūd is identical to the above mentioned Qur’ānic dialogue. The context of this dialogue in the Qur’ān is one of raising the dead: Ibrāhīm asks Allāh to show him how he raises the dead and Allāh asks him if he does not believe. Ibrāhīm’s answer is, “Yes, but that my heart may be at rest.” To prove that he is able to raise the dead, Allāh told Ibrāhīm to take four different kinds of birds, kill them, mix the different pieces together and place each piece in a different place. Then he was to call the birds and they would come to him, thereby proving that Allāh can raise the dead.¹⁷⁷ This use of Qur’ānic phrases within this tradition creates yet another link between a Qur’ānic miracle (this time performed by Allāh) and a miracle performed by the Imam. In the context of this tradition, it emphasises the fact that the deed performed by the Imam was one of raising the dead.

This tradition makes use of the term *šafa’a*. This term usually refers to the Prophet’s ability to intervene on the Day of Judgement of behalf of Muslims who have sinned. However, this intervention is not limited to the Prophet and is ascribed also to angels, other prophets, those who have died a martyr’s death and pious Muslims. The Šī’ī view is that after the Prophet, who holds the chief power of intervention, this

¹⁷⁵ Died 200/815, was known by the *kunya* Abū Sulaymān; see Ardabīlī, *Ġāmi’ al-ruwāt*, vol. 1, pp. 307-309, no. 2450.

¹⁷⁶ Rāwandī, *Ḥarā’iğ*, vol. 2, pp. 629-630, cited in Mağlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, pp. 104-105, no. 129. For a similar tradition which demonstrates the Imam’s power of intervention (*šafa’a*), see Rāwandī, *Ḥarā’iğ*, vol. 2, pp. 627-629, no. 28, cited in Mağlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, pp. 103-104, no. 128.

¹⁷⁷ See Qur’ān 2:260.

ability is attributed mainly to the Imams.¹⁷⁸ But here a different kind of *ṣafā'a* is at work; the Imam's power of intervention is evident in this world—an ability also ascribed to the Prophet¹⁷⁹—but this intervention is also related to this world, its aim being not the improvement of a person's standing in the next world, but his return to this world. This ability to intervene and affect a person's status in both worlds, so to speak, was evident also in the traditions telling of the Imam's ability to affect those whom he had punished by causing their death, but in those case, the intervention was not benevolent.

There are recurring patterns in all these traditions: a death, or near-death of a person, an appeal to the Imam, followed by a reassurance that the person has not died and a miraculous recovery. These patterns are evident in the tradition about the death of the son, the mother and in those telling of the death of a wife while on *ḥaḡḡ*,¹⁸⁰ but only some of them tell of the Imam's intervention. The recurring patterns in those tradition that do not tell of the Imam's intervention are perhaps supposed to hint to intervention by the Imam, even if this is not explicitly mentioned; the explanation of the miraculous recoveries related in the shorter traditions may therefore be found in the more detailed ones.

There are traditions in which the act of raising the dead is clearer: such a tradition tells that someone¹⁸¹ wanted to ask al-Ṣādiq a question. He was told that the poet al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī¹⁸² had died and that al-Ṣādiq was attending his funeral. He found al-Ṣādiq at the cemetery and asked him if he was the Imam of that period (*anta Imām ḥādā al-zamān*). Al-Ṣādiq replied affirmatively and the man asked for proof (*dalīl aw 'alāma*). Al-Ṣādiq said to him, "Ask me anything you wish, and I will answer you, if God so wills." The man said that he had a brother who had died and was buried in the cemetery, and he

¹⁷⁸ For the Ṣī position on *ṣafā'a*, see Mufid, *Awā'il*, pp. 14-15. Al-Ḥillī was in a minority among the Ṣī'a when denying the Imams' ability to intervene on Judgement Day; see Schmidtke, *Theology*, p. 238. See also Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis*, pp. 180-189.

¹⁷⁹ See "Shafā'a," *EI*², s.v. (A. J. Wensinck, D. Gimaret).

¹⁸⁰ There is another short tradition which tells of such a case in which all these patterns appear; see Qummī, *Bayā'ir*, p. 274, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 80, no. 64.

¹⁸¹ This person is not identified by name, but it is said that he is the grandfather of one Muḥammad b. Rāšid, about whom there is a short entry in Ardabīlī, *Gāmi' al-ruwāt*, vol. 2, p. 112.

¹⁸² About him, see below.

asked al-Šādiq to bring him back to life. Al-Šādiq told the man that he himself was not worthy of it, but his brother had been a believer. The Imam approached the man's grave, which split open, and the dead man emerged. He said to his brother, "Oh my brother, follow him and do not desert him," and then returned to his grave and al-Šādiq ordered the man not to tell anyone of the incident.¹⁸³

A similar incident is connected to al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī himself. A tradition tells that the poet came to see al-Šādiq after hearing that the Imam had said that he was a heretic. Al-Ḥimyarī asked the Imam how it is possible for him to be considered a heretic as he is hostile to the Imams' enemies. Al-Šādiq's reply was that this is of no importance if he does not believe in the *ḥuǧǧa*¹⁸⁴ of this period (*ḥuǧǧat al-dahr wa-l-zamān*). He took al-Ḥimyarī by the hand and led him into a house which had a grave inside it. The Imam prayed, then approached the grave and struck it with his hand. The grave opened and a man emerged from it. Al-Šādiq asked him, "Who are you?" He replied, "I am Muḥammad b. 'Alī, also known as Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya." The Imam asked, "And who am I?" The man said, "Ġa'far b. Muḥammad, the *ḥuǧǧa* of [this] time." This miracle caused al-Ḥimyarī to recognise al-Šādiq's Imamate (*taǧā'fara*).¹⁸⁵

This tradition is interesting because it involves two well-known personalities. Al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī (d. 179/795 or 173/789)¹⁸⁶ was a Šī'ī poet who in his youth supported the Kaysāniyya and recognised Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya's Imamate.¹⁸⁷ Šī'ī sources claim that later on in his life, he recognised the Imamī doctrine.¹⁸⁸ In both these traditions, al-Šādiq's ability to raise the dead serves as proof of his Imamate. In this last tradition, this is reinforced by the fact that the man raised from the

¹⁸³ Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ir*, cited in Maǧlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 118-119, no. 160. A shorter version of this tradition appears in Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 365, cited in Maǧlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 147, no. 188.

¹⁸⁴ Literally: proof. In Šī'ī terminology, the *ḥuǧǧa* is the person through which humans learn of God's existence and he is the proof of God's true will. In the absence of a *ḥuǧǧa*, humans would not be able to worship God, therefore, there must always be a *ḥuǧǧa* in this world. The present *ḥuǧǧa*, according to Šī'ī belief, is the Imam who is in Occultation; see "Ḥudjdja," *EI*², s.v. (M. G. S. Hodgson).

¹⁸⁵ Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 370.

¹⁸⁶ This tradition, like the one cited before it, is anachronistic, as al-Šādiq died several years before al-Ḥimyarī.

¹⁸⁷ See "Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyya," *EI*², s.v. (F. Buhl); "Kaysāniyya," *EI*², s.v. (W. Madelung).

¹⁸⁸ See "Al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī," *EI*², s.v. (W. Kadi).

dead is no other than Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya himself, and al-Ḥimyarī is convinced of al-Ṣādiq's Imamate because he sees that he can indeed raise the dead and because al-Ḥanafiyya himself orders him to follow al-Ṣādiq.

Al-Ṣādiq's ability to raise the dead is not limited to human beings. A tradition tells that al-Ṣādiq came across a woman and a young girl, who were standing next to a dead cow and weeping. He asked them why they were crying and the woman replied that the cow was their source of income and that now it had died. Al-Ṣādiq asked her if he would like Allāh to revive the cow, but the woman thought that he was making fun of her. Al-Ṣādiq told her this was not so. He then proceeded to pray, after which he struck the cow with his foot and it stood up. Seeing this, the woman said to al-Ṣādiq that he was like ʿĪsā b. Maryam.¹⁸⁹ The Imam then disappeared among the crowd without the woman finding out his identity.¹⁹⁰

The following tradition is another example of the Imam's ability to raise dead animals. The Imam called four different kinds of birds—a peacock, a raven, a falcon and a dove—to come before him. He ordered them to be killed and their limbs to be mixed up together and then held the peacock's head. Yūnus b. Zibyan¹⁹¹ describes thus what happened: "We saw its [the peacock] flesh, bones and feathers separating themselves from the limbs of the other birds and coming together with its head, and the peacock stood alive before us, and he [al-Ṣādiq] did the same with the raven, the falcon and the dove, and they all stood alive before us."¹⁹² This tradition is connected to the Qur'ānic verse mentioned above in which Allāh proves to Ibrāhīm that he is able to raise the dead by performing the same deed ascribed here to al-Ṣādiq.¹⁹³

These traditions which are related to matters of life and death show that the Imam's powers in this regard are multifarious. His powers may

¹⁸⁹ ʿĪsā is credited with the ability to raise the dead, see "ʿĪsā," *EI*², s.v. (G. C. Anawati).

¹⁹⁰ Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 1, p. 294, no. 1, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 115, no. 151.

¹⁹¹ About him, see Ardabīlī, *Ġāmiʿ al-rawāt*, vol. 2, pp. 355-356, no. 2516.

¹⁹² Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 1, p. 297, no. 4, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 111, no. 148.

¹⁹³ About the divine dimensions of the Imam, see M. A. Amir-Moezzi, "Aspects de l'imāmologie duodécimaine I: remarques sur la divinité de l'Imām," *Studia Iranica* 25i (1996): 193-214.

be used in a passive manner—thus in the cases where his predictions concerning a person's death come true without him taking action. In other cases, the Imam's part in the miracle is of a more active nature, as can be seen where he takes steps to cause a person's death or to save him from death. These powers are not limited to this world, and the Imam has influence also over a person's status beyond this life.

IV. *Nature-related miracles*

The traditions in this section demonstrate the various ways in which the Imam can influence his physical surroundings. This influence includes different natural phenomena and inanimate objects.

One such miracle attributed to al-Šādiq is that he caused an uprooted palm tree to give fruit: a tradition tells that the Imam ordered the tree to bear fruit, and ripe dates began falling from its branches and al-Šādiq and 'Abdallāh al-Balḥī, who was with him, ate the fruit. After witnessing this, al-Balḥī asked the Imam if the Imams' *sunna* was like that of Maryam, and al-Šādiq answered that it was.¹⁹⁴

A similar ability to influence nature can be seen in the following tradition: While travelling in the desert with 'Abdallāh al-Balḥī, al-Šādiq asked al-Balḥī if he could see water in the dry waterhole that they had come across. Al-Balḥī looked and reported that there was no water to be found. Al-Šādiq stood next to the waterhole and ordered it to bring forth water so that they could drink and fresh water began gushing forth. Seeing this, al-Balḥī said to the Imam that the Imams' *sunna* is like that of Mūsā¹⁹⁵ and the Imam asserted that this was so.¹⁹⁶

A tradition relates that al-Šādiq caused fruit to grow on a truncated palm tree and that he fed the fruit to Abū Maryam al-Madanī who was ill. Al-Madanī¹⁹⁷ describes this incident in the following words: "I saw the trunk of the tree sway, then it grew green branches, turned red and then yellow and fruit came forth and he [al-Šādiq] ate the

¹⁹⁴ Rāwandī, *Harā'ig*, vol. 2, p. 718, no. 20. See also Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, p. 257, no. 11; Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 366, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 77, no. 46, and also Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, p. 254, no. 5, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 76-77, no. 45.

¹⁹⁵ According to Qur'ān 2:60, Mūsā caused water to flow from a rock while in the desert.

¹⁹⁶ Rāwandī, *Harā'ig*, vol. 2, p. 777, no. 100. See also Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, pp. 512-513, no. 28, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47 pp. 92-93, no. 103.

¹⁹⁷ Unidentified.

fruit and fed me, and all this happened in a blink of an eye.”¹⁹⁸ According to another tradition, Mūsā al-Kāẓim told his father that wanted to eat pomegranates and Jarash¹⁹⁹ grapes. Dāwūd b. Kaṭīr al-Raqqī heard this and expressed surprise, remarking that it was winter. Al-Ṣādiq told him that Allāh can do as he wishes and told him to go into the garden. Dāwūd did so and found within a tree on which pomegranates and Jarash grapes were growing.²⁰⁰ He took the fruit to Mūsā, who ate them and said that they were like the bounty of God given in the past only to Maryam b. ‘Imrān.²⁰¹

There is another tradition according to which al-Ṣādiq caused a tree to bring forth fruit and a Bedouin, who was passing by at the time, remarked that he had never seen such an act of magic (*sihr*). Al-Ṣādiq retorted, “We are the heirs of the prophets and there are no magicians (*sāḥir*) or soothsayers (*kāhin*) among us; we pray to Allāh and he answers our prayers.” The Imam then asked the Bedouin if he would like to be turned into a dog. The man, who apparently did not believe the Imam,²⁰² replied that he would. The Imam prayed and at that very moment, the man turned into a dog and started walking away. Al-Ṣādiq told ‘Alī b. Abī Ḥamza, who witnessed this incident, to follow the dog. He did so and saw that when the dog reached his house, his wife would not let him enter. ‘Alī returned to the Imam and while he was telling him what he had saw, the dog approached them and began whining and wallowing in the dust. The Imam took pity on him and turned him back into a human being, after which the man fervently expressed his belief in the Imam’s power.²⁰³

The miracle of the uprooted tree demonstrates the Imam’s ability to bring about an event which goes against the laws of nature. The process

¹⁹⁸ Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, pp. 625-626, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 102, no. 126.

¹⁹⁹ A city in Jordan, also the name of a district in Yemen; Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, p. 617, note 3.

²⁰⁰ The use of the word *ṣaḡara* is peculiar, since grapes do not usually grow on trees. Moreover, it is not clear whether the grapes and pomegranates were growing on the same tree (or plant). If this is taken to mean that the fruit was all growing in the same place, perhaps this should be understood to reflect another miraculous aspect, indicating the appearance of a new kind of hybrid tree that had not existed beforehand.

²⁰¹ Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 2, p. 617, no. 16, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 100, no. 119.

²⁰² The tradition says “the Bedouin—in his ignorance—said ‘of course’.”

²⁰³ Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʾiḡ*, vol. 1, p. 296, no. 3, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 110-111, no. 147.

by which fruit grows on tree is not unusual in itself, but in this case, this natural process took place in highly unusual circumstances. This miraculous aspect is further enhanced by the speed at which this took place, which makes it obvious that it was a direct consequence of the Imam's order.

‘Abdallāh al-Balḥī's remark and al-Šādiq's answer in the tradition cited at the beginning of this section are part of a pattern which appears in other traditions—the linking of an Imāmī miracle to a Qur'ānic one. In this case, al-Šādiq's deed is linked to story, according to which a tree miraculously bore fruit for Maryam after she gave birth to ‘Īsā.²⁰⁴ This incident is regarded as a miracle, but there is disagreement as to whom it should be attributed. In his commentary on this verse, al-Rāzī recognises that this event took place in winter and that it violated the course of nature.²⁰⁵ He reports that the Mu'tazila considers this to be a *mu'ǧiza* of Zakariyā but he regards this as impossible, as Zakariyā did not know where Maryam was or that she was in need of help, and says that this incident was either a *karāma* given to Maryam or an *irḥāṣ* of ‘Īsā.²⁰⁶ Al-Ṭabrisī also says that this event took place in winter and that it was unusual because of the rapid growth of the fruit, but according to him, this event should be considered a *mu'ǧiza*.²⁰⁷ He does not say who performed this *mu'ǧiza*, but remarks that a similar deed is attributed to al-Šādiq.²⁰⁸

The importance of the questions of to whom the Qur'ānic miracle should be attributed and whether it should be considered a *mu'ǧiza* lies in its comparison to al-Šādiq's deed. If the event described in the Qur'ān is considered a prophetic *mu'ǧiza* rather than a *karāma*, it serves

²⁰⁴ This link to Maryam also exists in the tradition about the Jarash grapes.

²⁰⁵ Al-Rāzī says, “Who should these extraordinary deeds be ascribed to?” (*fa-tilka al-af‘āl al-ḥāriqa li-l-‘āda li-man?*), presenting this as an anonymous question; Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, vol. 21, pp. 175-176.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ This is also al-Ḥillī's opinion; see Ḥillī, *Anwār*, p. 276. According to al-Ardabīlī, this event was a *mu'ǧiza* of ‘Īsā; see (Pseudo.) al-Ardabīlī, *Ḥadiqat al-sī'a*, cited in Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 39. According to al-Ta‘labī's *Qissa al-anbiyā*, this took place out of season; see “Zakariyā,” *EI*, s.v. (B. Heller); this is probably why both al-Rāzī and al-Ṭabrisī say that this event took place in winter.

²⁰⁸ Ṭabrisī, *Maǧma‘ al-bayān*, vol. 16, p. 31, “*wa-huwa al-marwī ‘an Abī ‘Abdallāh*.” Generally speaking, this can be understood as “This was told about Abū ‘Abdallāh” or “This was told by Abū ‘Abdallāh.” In his commentary to Qur'an 2:260, which tells that Allāh brought birds back to life, a deed also attributed to al-Šādiq, al-Ṭabrisī says “*wa-huwa al-marwī ‘an Abī ‘Abdallāh*”; see Ṭabrisī, *Maǧma‘ al-bayān*, vol. 2, p. 325.

to reinforce the Šīʿī view according to which Imāmī miracles are identical to prophetic miracles. These patterns of an order given by al-Šādiq, an immediate result and the link to a Qurʾānic miracle are also all to be found in the tradition about the waterhole,²⁰⁹ but in this case, it is clear that the link is to a miracle performed by Mūsā and therefore the link to a prophetic miracle is obvious.

The tradition about the man who was turned into a dog includes a few interesting points. One is al-Šādiq's reaction to the man's claim that the deed he performed was magic (*sihr*). The term *sihr* can be understood in several ways,²¹⁰ but from al-Šādiq's answer, it can be understood that in this context it is conceived of as a negative force,²¹¹ the use of which should not be attributed to the Imams. Here the Imam uses metamorphosis (*mash*)—usually considered a divine punishment²¹²—to punish the man for his assumption that the Imam was a magician. Al-Šādiq's statement that the Imams are the prophet's heirs creates yet another link between the Imams and the prophets.

The Imam also has the ability to change an object's most basic properties and to influence natural phenomena. One tradition tells that Sahl b. Ḥasan al-Ḥurāsānī²¹³ asked al-Šādiq why he did not go to war to obtain his rights, although there were many Šīʿīs who would be willing to fight for him. Al-Šādiq did not answer this question directly, and asked Sahl to sit down and told his servant to heat the oven. When the oven was very hot, he told Sahl to sit inside it. Sahl was frightened and asked the Imam to forgive him for his question. Al-Šādiq forgave him and while the two were speaking, Hārūn al-Makki²¹⁴ arrived at the Imam's house. Al-Šādiq then told him to sit in the oven and

²⁰⁹ There is a tradition that combines the story of the tree and the waterhole; see Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʿiḡ*, vol. 1, pp. 297-299, no. 5, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 111-113, no. 149.

²¹⁰ See "Sihr," *EI*², s.v. (T. Fahd).

²¹¹ For *sihr* as a negative force, see Rāwandī, *Ḥarāʿiḡ*, vol. 3, p. 1019.

²¹² See "Maskh," *EI*², s.v. (C. Pellat), and also Cook, M., "Ibn Qutayba and the Monkeys," *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999): 43-74 and M. A. Amir-Moezzi, "Seul l'homme de Dieu est humain—Théologie et anthropologie mystique à travers l'exégèse imamite ancienne (Aspects de l'imamologie duodécimaine IV)," *Arabica* 45 (1998): 193-214. For a survey of various opinions regarding *mash*, see also H. Ben Shammai, "Transmigration of Souls in Tenth Century Jewish Thought in the Orient," in *Sefunot* [Studies on the History of Jewish Communities in the East], vol. 20, pp. 117-136, esp. 117-124 (in Hebrew).

²¹³ Unidentified.

²¹⁴ Unidentified.

he obeyed. After some time, al-Šādiq told Sahl to look inside the oven. He did this and saw Hārūn alive and well sitting inside the oven. Al-Šādiq turned to Sahl and asked him how many such people he would find in Ḥurāsān (meaning how many would obey him without hesitation), and Sahl replied that he would find no one. Al-Šādiq said, “Indeed, no one. We will not go [to war] when we cannot find even five people who will assist us; we know best of all when to set out [to war].”²¹⁵

Another tradition tells that al-Manṣūr sent Ḥasan b. Zayd (d. 168/784-85),²¹⁶ the governor of Mecca and Medina, to burn down al-Šādiq’s house. The fire spread through the house and al-Šādiq came out, walking among the flames saying, “I am the son of A’rāq al-tura,²¹⁷ I am the son of Ibrāhīm the friend of God (*ḥalīl Allāh*).”²¹⁸

These last two traditions reveal another aspect of the Imam’s powers—he is able to protect himself and others from fire. Unlike the traditions about the palm tree or the waterhole, where the Imam is able to bring about a natural process in unnatural circumstances, here he is able to reverse the occurrence of a natural process by being able to contravene the fire’s power to burn. The link to Ibrāhīm is part of the general pattern already remarked upon in these traditions, whereby an Imāmī miracle is linked to a miracle performed in the Qur’ān by a prophet. Here the comparison is to Ibrāhīm, who as well as being a prophet, also had a special standing as *ḥalīl Allāh*. In this case, the link is not only between a prophetic and an Imāmī miracle, but also between al-Šādiq’s enemies and those of Ibrāhīm, who threw him in the fire, but was not harmed.²¹⁹

The Imam can also affect inanimate objects, as shown in the following tradition: among a group of people who came to visit al-Šādiq, there was a man from Hind named Mīzāb b. Ḥabāb. At first, the Imam would not allow Mīzāb to come before him, claiming that he

²¹⁵ Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, pp. 362-363, cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, pp. 123-124, no. 172.

²¹⁶ He was appointed as governor of Mecca and Medina in 151/768, a post from which he was deposed in 155/772; see Kennedy, *Al-Manṣūr*, p. 49.

²¹⁷ A’rāq: ancestors. ‘araq al-tura was a name given to Ādam by Imru’u al-Qays—the ancestor of all humans or to Ismā‘īl—the ancestor of the Arabs; see Lane, ‘*r. q* and also the note in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, p. 136.

²¹⁸ Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 362, cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, p. 136, no. 186.

²¹⁹ See Qur’ān 21:68-70; 29:24; 37:97-98 and also “Ibrāhīm,” *EI*², s.v. (R. Paret).

was unclean, but after a while he relented. When he entered, Mīzāb said that he had been sent by the King of Hind and complained at how he had been treated, asking if this is the way prophets behave. Al-Ṣādiq's reply was: "With time, you will know the truth."²²⁰ The Imam read the letter that Mīzāb had brought with him. In the letter the King of Hind had written that he had wanted to send the Imam a slave-girl as a gift, and towards that aim, he had to choose the most trusted of his people to accompany her. To do so, he gathered a thousand of his trusted men, from which he selected one hundred. From these he selected ten, and from among these he chose Mīzāb as the most reliable and trustworthy. Mīzāb had brought the slave-girl, along with other gifts, to al-Ṣādiq, but he refused to accept any of them, saying that Mīzāb had betrayed the trust granted to him. When Mīzāb denied this, the Imam said that one of his garments would testify to his sins. He ordered Mīzāb to take off the fur coat that he was wearing, and then he stood up and prayed. While praying, he asked Allāh to enable to coat to speak in clear Arabic so that all present would be able to hear and that it would be a sign of *ahl al-bayt* (*āya min āyāt ahl al-bayt*). The Imam then turned to and ordered it to speak. In Mūsā al-Kāzim's words, "The fur garment shook and resembled a deer." The garment began to speak and said that on the way to see the Imam, Mīzāb had tempted the slave-girl and slept with her. Hearing this, Mīzāb threw himself on the ground, confessed, and asked for forgiveness. The garment became still again and al-Ṣādiq told Mīzāb to put it on. When he did so, it clung to his neck and choked him until his face turned black. Al-Ṣādiq ordered the garment to release him and told him to go back to his king and take the girl with him. A few months later, al-Ṣādiq received a letter from the King of Hind saying that he had punished Mīzāb and the girl and executed them, and he himself had converted to Islam.²²¹

This ability to cause inanimate objects to speak is also demonstrated in the following tradition: a man from al-Jabal brought a sack of dried meat as a present for al-Ṣādiq. The Imam threw the meat away and ordered it to be fed to the dogs, saying it had not been slaughtered according to law. The man replied that he had bought it from a Muslim

²²⁰ Qur'ān 38:88.

²²¹ Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 1, pp. 299-303, no. 6, cited in Maḡlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 47, pp. 113-115, no. 150. For a slightly different version, see Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, pp. 367-368.

who had slaughtered the meat as required. Al-Šādiq handed the meat to him, saying a few incomprehensible words, and told him to take it into the house and put it down in the corner. The man did so and heard the meat say, "The Imam and the descendents of the Prophet should not eat me; I was not properly slaughtered." The man reported this to al-Šādiq, who said that the Imams know that which is not known to other people, and the meat was fed to the dogs.²²²

These two traditions, like those about the palm tree and the water-hole, show the Imam's ability to influence his surroundings, but they reveal a different aspect of this ability; while it is natural for water to flow from a waterhole and fruit to grow on a tree, it is highly unnatural for inanimate objects to speak. The miracle consists of the appearance of entirely new properties—the ability to speak—in inanimate objects. The miraculous nature of the Imam's act in this context is therefore not limited to the circumstances of the occurrence, but is inherent in the occurrence itself. Moreover, the miracle of the speaking garment and meat can be seen as a kind of revival, as these objects were once parts of a living creature. Another important aspect is that the Imam knew what these objects had to say before they spoke and these miracles were a way of confirming the veracity of this knowledge.

There are therefore several kinds of miracles which involve the Imams's ability to influence his physical surroundings. One kind of miracle occurs when the Imam causes the occurrence of a natural process in unnatural circumstances and at a high speed. The pace of the process and the circumstances in which the event occurs are the elements which violate the course of nature in these cases. Another kind of miracle is when the Imam can contravene a natural process; a third is causing the occurrence of unnatural processes in unusual circumstances.

V. *Miscellaneous miracles*

There are a number of traditions relating miracles that cannot easily be relegated to any of the categories above. There are relatively few such traditions; they will therefore not be described at length. These miracles include the Imam's ability to transcend the usual limitations

²²² Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, pp. 606-607, no. 1, cited in Maḡlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 95, no. 107. See also Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 350.

of time and space: thus, al-Šādiq is able to cover great distances in a short time²²³ and to travel beyond the borders of this world.²²⁴ Several traditions tell of the Imam's authority over the *ġinn*: they are at his command and consult him, as do his human followers.²²⁵ A number of traditions tell of vision-related miracles, which involve al-Šādiq's ability to keep others from seeing him,²²⁶ to heal the blind²²⁷ and to cause others to see that which is usually invisible.²²⁸

Conclusions

The traditions discussed in this paper were probably compiled in the mid-second/eighth century and represent an early stage of Šī'ī *ḥadīth* literature.²²⁹ To a certain extent, these traditions underly the main body of Šī'ī theological literature which developed at a later stage. Thus it can be seen that the view of the Šī'ī theologians, according to which the aim of the Imāmī miracle is to prove the Imam's right to the Imamate, coincides with the aim of the miracle as portrayed in these traditions. This aim of the miracle is especially conspicuous in the traditions dealing with knowledge-related miracles, where the Imam's knowledge is proof of his abilities and where he is put to the test by those who doubt him.

The miracle has other purposes, among which is the punishment of those who disobey the Imam or wish to harm him. Therefore, the miracle is not only an event "inviting to good and happiness," but also a means to warn, threaten and punish those who deserve it. However, a

²²³ Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, p. 264, no. 24.

²²⁴ See Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, pp. 403-404, no. 3; pp. 405-406, no. 5 and al-Šarīf al-Murtaḍā, *Uyūn al-mu'ǧizāt*, cited in Maǧlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 159, no. 227.

²²⁵ *Baṣā'ir*, p. 99, no. 9, cited in *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 65. See also Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, pp. 627-629, no. 28. For a case in which the *ġinn* consult the Imam, see al-Irbilī, *Kaif al-ǧumma*, cited in Maǧlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 147-149, no. 203.

²²⁶ See Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, pp. 774-775, no. 97, cited in Maǧlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 121, no. 168 and Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, p. 495, no. 2 or Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 2, pp. 773-774, no. 96 and Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, pp. 494-495, no. 1, cited in Maǧlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, p. 169, no. 11; Abū Ġa'far Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulīnī, *al-Uṣūl min al-kāfi* (Beirut, 1401), vol. 2, pp. 559-560, no. 12.

²²⁷ Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, pp. 271-272, no. 7, cited in Maǧlisī, *Bihār*, p. 79, no. 59. See also Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 3, p. 364.

²²⁸ Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, p. 270, no. 4. See also Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, p. 270, no. 6 and Rāwandī, *Ḥarā'ig*, cited in Maǧlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 47, pp. 29-30, no. 3. See also Amir-Moezzi, "Savoir c'est pouvoir," p. 260 and the additional references given there.

²²⁹ On the dating of this literature, see n. 13 above.

miracle can also be used to reward the Imam's followers and to help others.

Since one of the main purposes of the Imāmī miracle is to prove the Imam's right to the Imamate, it must be performed in public, but this exposure of a miracle is problematic and its manifestation might endanger the Imam and his followers. There is, therefore, a conflict between the requirement to display the Imāmī miracle and the need to observe *taqīyya*. This conflict can occasionally be seen in the Imam's injunction to keep the occurrence of a miracle secret or in the reversal of a miracle's effect.²³⁰ The traditions are not consistent in this respect and there are cases in which al-Ṣādiq's miracles are performed in the presence of his greatest enemies (such as al-Manṣūr).

The Imam's miracles have a moral purpose as well; the Imam's knowledge and abilities are used to rebuke others for their immoral behaviour. Likewise, not all his followers are considered worthy of witnessing his miracles.

There are a number of means by which the Imam performs miracles. One of these is prayer, and the pattern in which the Imam prays immediately before performing a miracle is common. Likewise, the Imam also brings about a miracle by a direct order. The traditions in which the Imam's prayers are answered immediately serve to emphasise that the Imam's powers are granted to him by God. The prayers are sometimes accompanied by body movements, such as the raising of hands or pointing.

One of the striking patterns in these traditions is the link between al-Ṣādiq and characters mentioned in the Qur'ān. This link is created in several ways, one of which is the comparison of a miracle performed by al-Ṣādiq with a miracle mentioned in the Qur'ān. Thus al-Ṣādiq's deeds are compared to the *sunna* of Maryam, Mūsā and Sulaymān. The use of the word *sunna* raises the association of *sunnat al-nabī*,²³¹ thus implying that the Imams, like the Prophet, also have a defined *sunna* which is characterised, among other things, by the routine performance

²³⁰ See Qummī, *Baṣā'ir*, pp. 271-272, no. 7, where al-Ṣādiq cures Abū Baṣīr's blindness, but afterwards deprives him of his sight. See also Kohlberg, "Vision," p. 24.

²³¹ On the significance and development of the concept of *sunnat al-nabī*, see M. Bravmann, *The Spiritual Background of Early Islam* (Leiden, 1972), pp. 123-177, esp. 123-135, and G. H. A. Juynboll, "Some New Ideas on the Development of *Sunna* as a Technical Term in Early Islam," *JSAI* 10 (1987): 97-118, reprinted in his *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Hadīth* (Aldershot, 1996), art. V.

of miracles. This subtle and associative comparison treads the thin line which differentiates between the concepts of prophecy and Imamate in Imamī thought. The tension between these two concepts, which stems from the Imamiyya's wish to elevate the Imams' status without undermining that of the Prophet, comes to light in such allusions which recur throughout the traditions dealing with the Imams' miracles.

The recurrent use of the Qur'ānic dialogue (Qur'an 2:260) is another way in which al-Ṣādiq's miracles are linked to those performed in the Qur'an. The use of this specific interchange is no coincidence, as it contains a declaration of faith which follows an expression of doubt: Ibrāhīm doubted Allāh's ability to raise the dead and was then convinced of it. In the context of al-Ṣādiq's miracles, this interchange appears after the performance of a miracle by the Imam. Thus, apart from creating a link between Ibrāhīm and al-Ṣādiq, the use of this dialogue also enhances the veracity of al-Ṣādiq's miracles.

There is a symmetry in all al-Ṣādiq's deeds: he can kill and bring people back to life, obstruct vision and cure blindness, turn a human into an animal and bring out human properties in animals. The Imam's unique abilities allow him to act as a link between the human and the animal world and between this world and the next. He can carry out extraordinary acts and enable others to take part in his miracles. After performing a miracle, he can restore normal conditions, an act which according to one opinion, requires advanced powers.²³²

The miracles ascribed to al-Ṣādiq were the focal point of this paper. The assumption is that the miracles attributed to other Imams are essentially of the same nature; this assumption, however, can only be proved by an exhaustive examination of the miracles attributed to each Imam. In addition to this, since the Šī'ī claim is that there is no difference between the prophetic and the Imāmī miracle, it would be worthwhile to investigate any similarities between the miracles attributed to the Prophet and the Imams²³³ and to examine the possibilities of Šī'ī influence on Sunnī traditions, and vice versa.

²³² See al-Rāwandī's opinion in *Ḥarā'ig*, vol. 3, pp. 1042-1043.

²³³ A cursory glance at some of the miracles attributed to Muḥammad shows that they are indeed similar to those discussed above. To cite a few examples, the Prophet has knowledge of hidden things and of the future, he may remain invisible to his enemies, who are struck with blindness and are unable to harm him, and his prayers against his enemies are answered; see Horovitz, "The Muḥammad Legend," pp. 55-57. Likewise, the miracles attributed to Muḥammad and those attributed to 'Alī are similar; see M. M. Bar-Asher, "The Qur'an Commentary ascribed to Imam Ḥasan al-'Askari," *JSAI* 24 (2000): 366-368.

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²³⁴ This list includes only items mentioned more than once.

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